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SAS FRAUD

Was David Stirling a phoney?

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

Historian James Holland reveals why the Pacific War's carrier clash was so critical to victory over Japan

ANTIETAM 1862

How the Civil War showdown became the bloodiest day in US history

HISTORY OF NATO

Origins and campaigns of the world's most powerful military alliance

POLAND'S SOLDIER BEAR

The real story behind one of WWII's most endearing animal mascots

FUTURE

ISSUE 107

KING & COUNTRY
UK AUTHORISED DEALER

The Emperor's Dragons à Pied

NAPOLEON first conceived of dismounted dragoons when gathering his army at Boulogne for the planned invasion of Britain in 1805.

These dismounted cavalrymen would be part of the initial landing force and would, hopefully, find horses upon arrival on the south coast of England.

After the cancellation of the invasion, following the French defeat at Trafalgar, the now *"Foot Dragoons"* found themselves marching and fighting on foot against Austria and Russia.

NA497
(2 figures set)

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

The uniforms and equipment of these dragoons reflected their versatility and uniqueness. Their brass helmets are in the style of the heavy cavalry while their green coats are in the traditional colour of French light cavalry and infantry.

NA495
(2 figures set)

These new Dragoons are in *"skirmish"* formation, fighting as infantry while still carrying the regulation dragoon musket. As *"Foot Dragoons"* they are also waering infantry footgear and long black gaiters and equipped with the standard French infantry backpack.

THIS FIRST RELEASE

Over a number of months King & Country are releasing *18* original sculpts of fighting *"Dragons a Pied"* led by a mounted officer. Put some or all of them together and you have a handsome-looking Napoleonic display of some of the Emperor's finest and most colourful foot soldiers.

FOR MORE DETAILS...

And information about KING & COUNTRY'S figures and fighting vehicles or any of K&C's many other historical series of *1:30 scale, all-metal, hand-painted miniatures* simply contact Britain's biggest and best, authorized dealer...

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(2 figures set)
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NA489

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Welcome

Each passing month marks different 80-year milestones for many of the most poignant and important moments of the Second World War. In May, 1942, perhaps one of the most important encounters – certainly in the Pacific War – took place around Midway Atoll, between the US and Japanese fleets. From fighting on the back foot almost entirely for five months, the carrier engagement at Midway saw a resounding turnaround in the war for the US. For Japan, Admiral Yamamoto's ominous prediction that success against their powerful adversary could only last a matter of months, was becoming a reality. This issue, historian James Holland explains how the US turned the tide in the battle and what it meant for Japan's hitherto unstoppable conquests.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES HOLLAND

Historian, author and co-host of the podcast *We Have Ways of Making You Talk*, James spoke with *History of War* about the Battle of Midway. He reveals how the US achieved victory, and why the result was so important for the course of the war in the Pacific (page 24).

MIGUEL MIRANDA

A regular to the *History of War* pages, Miguel is an historian, author and journalist based in Manila, Philippines. Starting on page 12 he recounts the history of NATO – one of the world's most powerful military alliances.

GAVIN MORTIMER

Gavin is a renowned expert on the history of the special forces, particularly during the Second World War. On page 40 he takes on one of the most famed figures in that history: David Stirling, the founder of the SAS.

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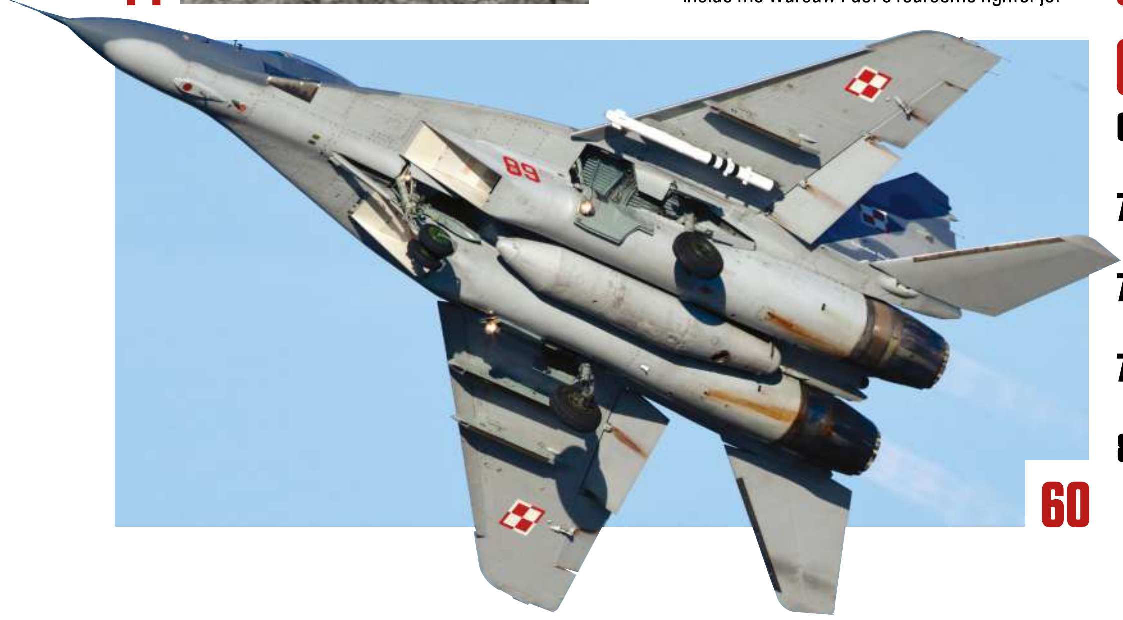

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Author of *At the Gates of Rome*

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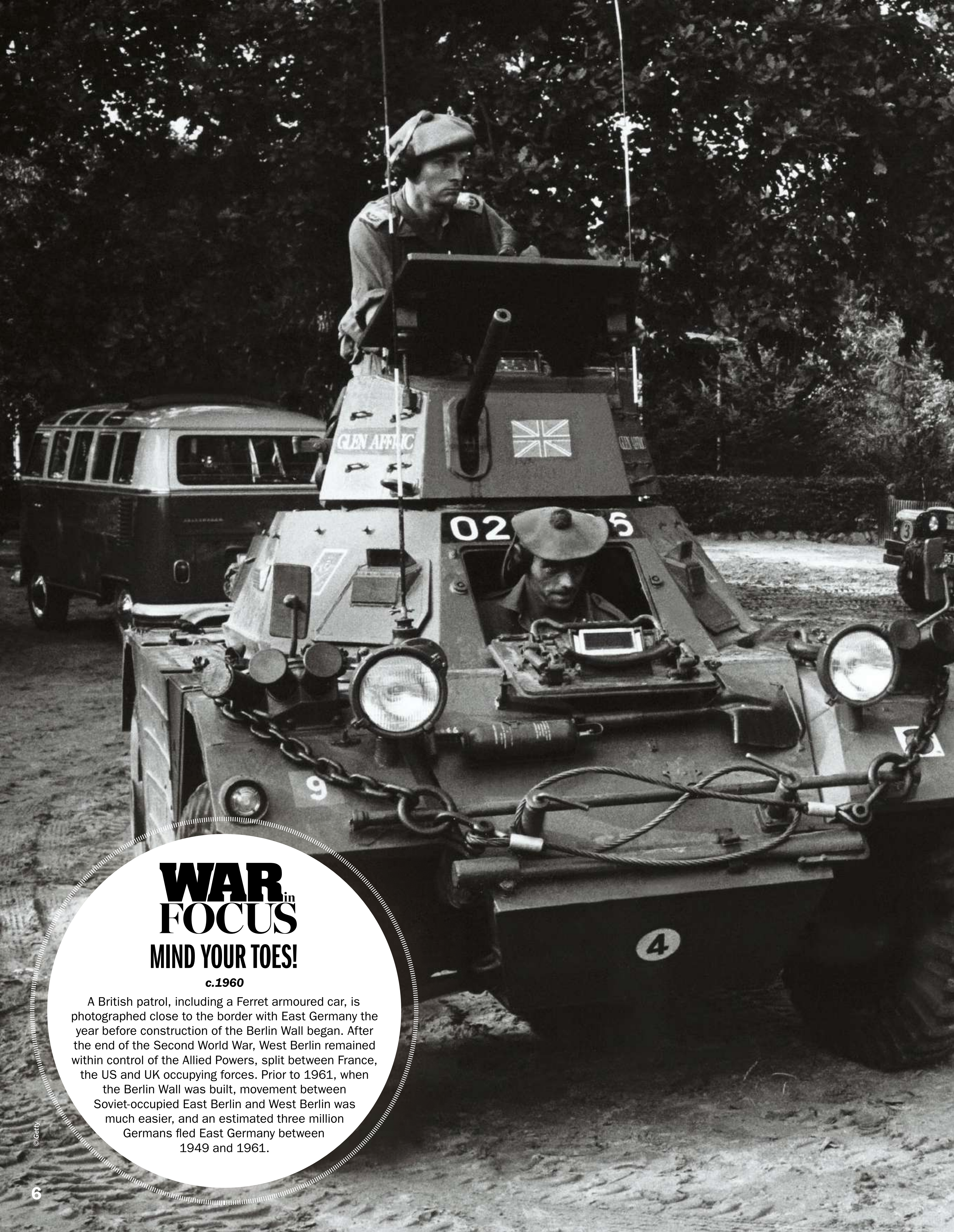
A decorative quilt stitched by POWs captured during the Fall of Singapore, 1942

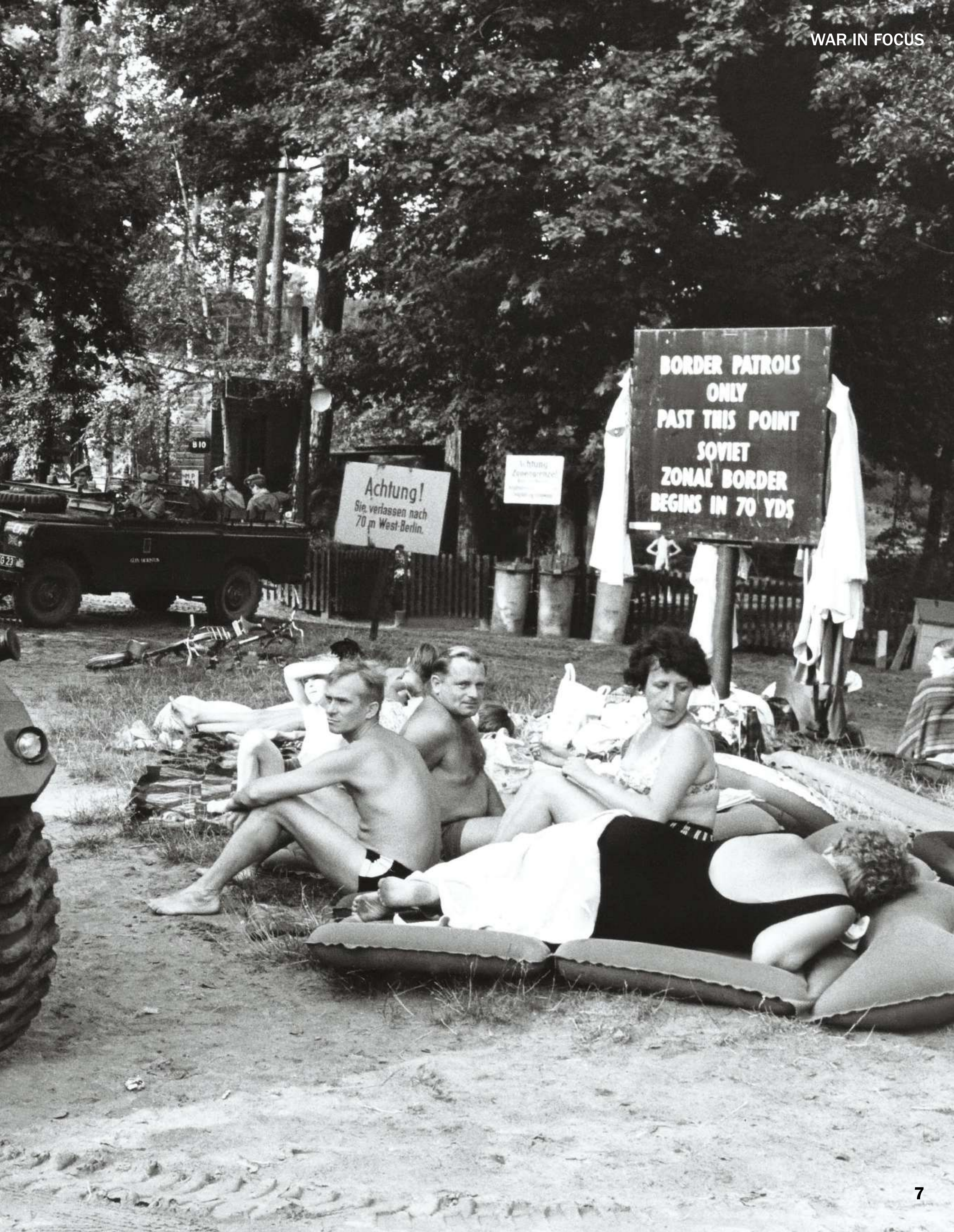


MIND YOUR TOES!

c.1960

A British patrol, including a Ferret armoured car, is photographed close to the border with East Germany the year before construction of the Berlin Wall began. After the end of the Second World War, West Berlin remained within control of the Allied Powers, split between France, the US and UK occupying forces. Prior to 1961, when the Berlin Wall was built, movement between Soviet-occupied East Berlin and West Berlin was much easier, and an estimated three million Germans fled East Germany between 1949 and 1961.

© Getty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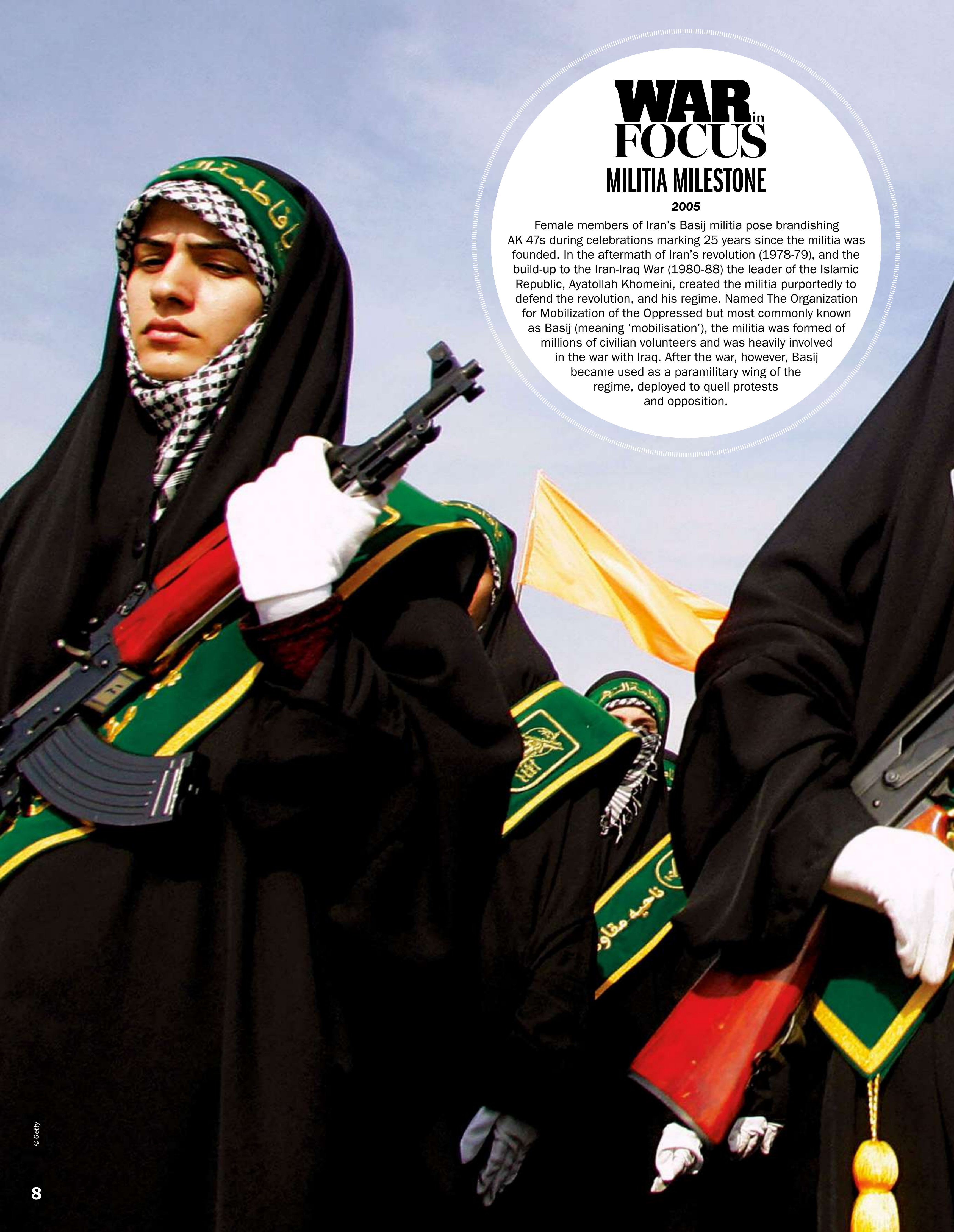
ONLY
PAST THIS POINT
SOVIET
ZONAL BORDER
BEGINS IN 70 YDS
Achtung!
Sie verlassen nach
70 m West-Berlin.
Achtung
Zonengrenze!
B10



WAR in FOCUS

MILITIA MILESTONE

2005

Female members of Iran's Basij militia pose brandishing AK-47s during celebrations marking 25 years since the militia was founded. In the aftermath of Iran's revolution (1978-79), and the build-up to the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) the leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini, created the militia purportedly to defend the revolution, and his regime. Named The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed but most commonly known as Basij (meaning 'mobilisation'), the militia was formed of millions of civilian volunteers and was heavily involved in the war with Iraq. After the war, however, Basij became used as a paramilitary wing of the regime, deployed to quell protests and opposition.

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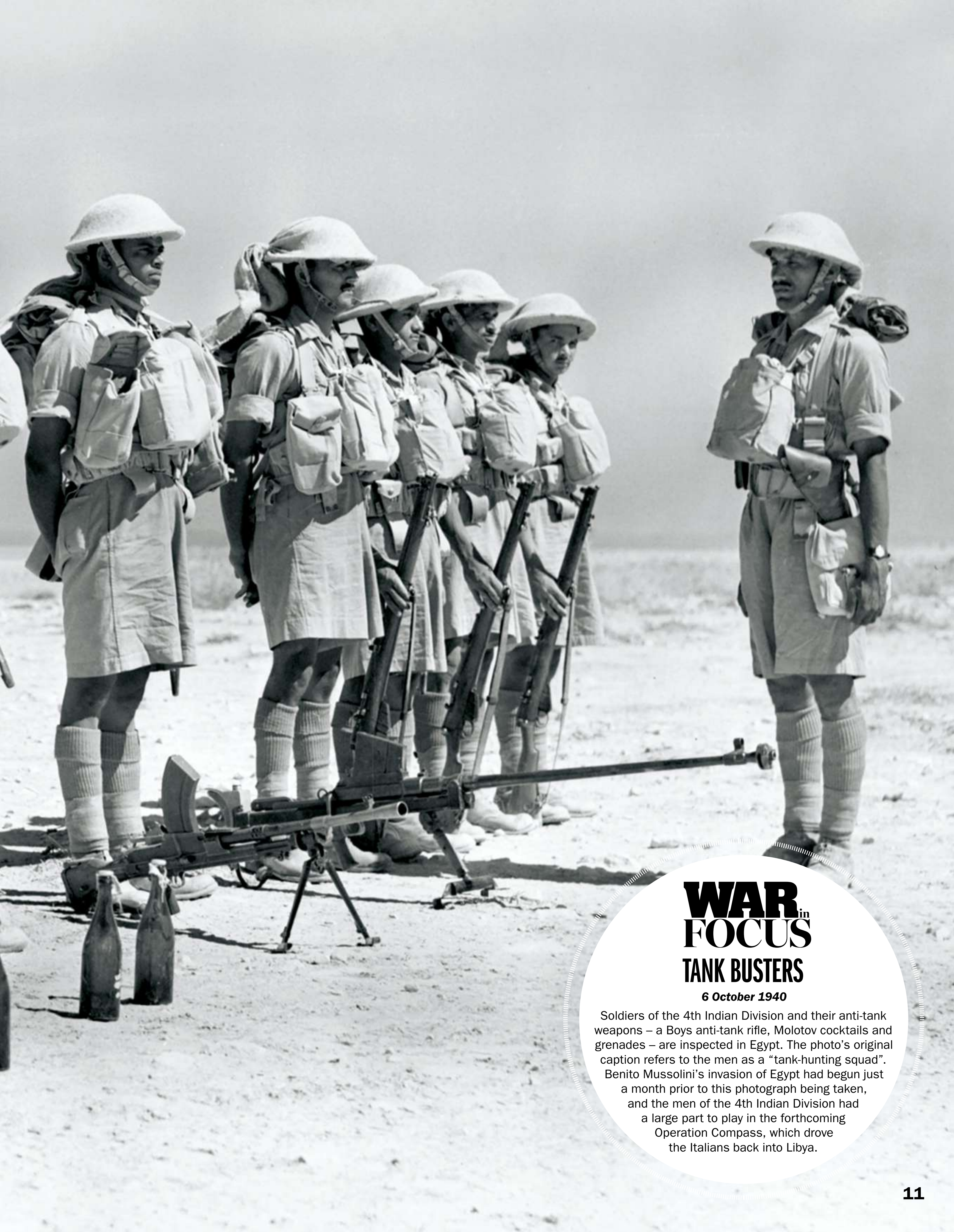


WAR in FOCUS

TANK BUSTERS

6 October 1940

Soldiers of the 4th Indian Division and their anti-tank weapons – a Boys anti-tank rifle, Molotov cocktails and grenades – are inspected in Egypt. The photo's original caption refers to the men as a "tank-hunting squad". Benito Mussolini's invasion of Egypt had begun just a month prior to this photograph being taken, and the men of the 4th Indian Division had a large part to play in the forthcoming Operation Compass, which drove the Italians back into Libya.

TIMELINE OF... NATO

With the Soviet threat looming over Europe, the United States moves to contain Moscow's influence with a new and more potent alliance between the continent's leading democracies

1950-53

THE KOREAN WAR 02

Although the war never involves the NATO alliance, the invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950 galvanises the member countries to send forces under a United Nations mandate. China and the Soviet Union become directly involved and hostilities continue until the ceasefire on 27 July 1953.

2 February 1946

THE LONG TELEGRAM

Just months after the end of World War II the American ambassador in Moscow, George Kennan, sends a report to the State Department explaining the Kremlin's expansionist ideology. To oppose growing Soviet influence and power Kennan argues it's vitally important to uphold democratic ideals in the West.

After 1945 Joseph Stalin was the most powerful European leader, whose armies occupied at least 10 countries

4 April 1949

NATO IS BORN 01

Eager to strengthen collective security in Western Europe, the representatives of 12 countries – including Iceland and Denmark – meet in Washington DC and sign the founding documents of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

An interesting detail about NATO's founding was Algeria becoming a de facto member – as a colonial territory of France

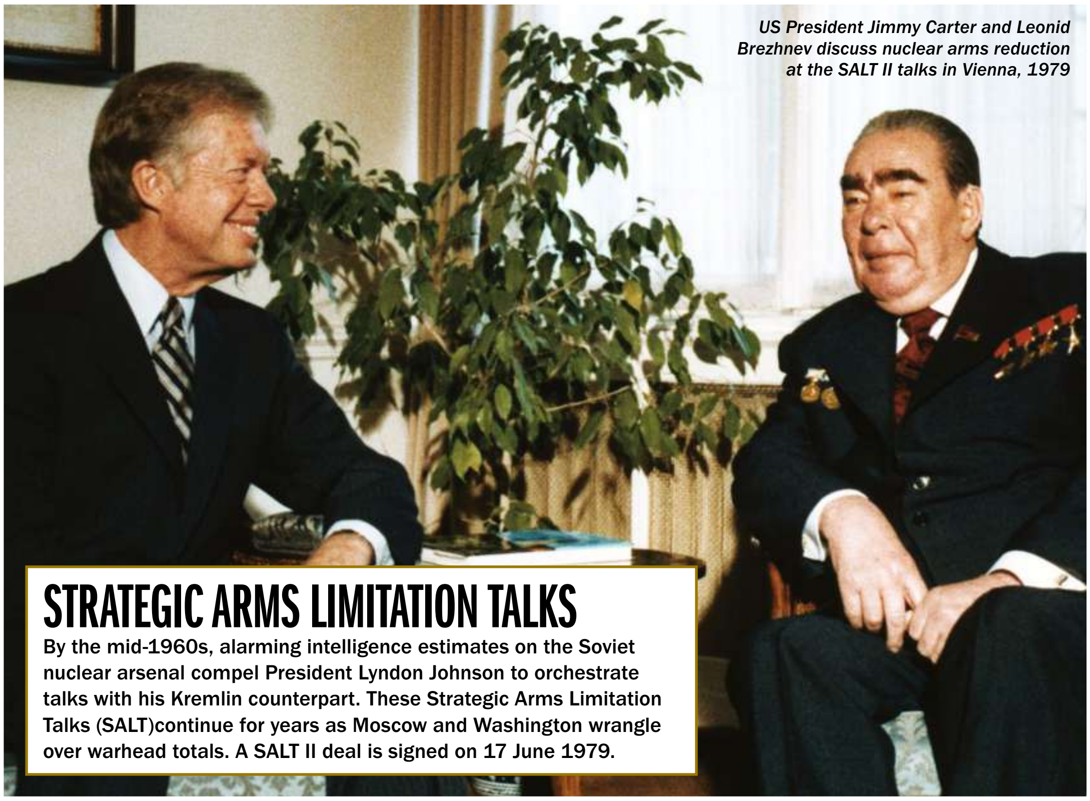
October – November 1956

HUNGARY FALLS 03

Soviet forces overrun the small country to quash a popular revolt led by democratic reformers. The harsh response orchestrated from Moscow confirms fears of a looming NATO and Warsaw Pact clash in the coming decades.

The Red Army met little resistance as it entered Budapest but ended up fighting armed civilians for days after

Over 50,000 American troops are killed in the Korean War. China is estimated to have suffered 600,000 casualties



US President Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev discuss nuclear arms reduction at the SALT II talks in Vienna, 1979

1970s

STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS

By the mid-1960s, alarming intelligence estimates on the Soviet nuclear arsenal compel President Lyndon Johnson to orchestrate talks with his Kremlin counterpart. These Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)continue for years as Moscow and Washington wrangle over warhead totals. A SALT II deal is signed on 17 June 1979.

1970s – 1980s

A MADNESS FOR MISSILES

The emergence of intercontinental nuclear missiles (ICBMs) in the 1950s leads to an unchecked arms buildup between the USA and USSR. Aside from silo-based missiles, both countries have large fleets of bombers and nuclear-powered submarines loaded with ICBMs.

A Soviet crew trains with a Scud launcher armed with a tactical short-range ballistic missile. These nuclear-capable weapons were deployed on both sides of the Iron Curtain

1966

DE GAULLE STEPS OUT 04

Facing a domestic political crisis after the loss of Algeria as French territory, President Charles de Gaulle declares France's withdrawal from the unified NATO command. This decision prompts a shift of the official NATO headquarters from Paris to Brussels, Belgium, where it remains today.

August 1968

PRAGUE SPRING 05

To prevent the Warsaw Pact from fracturing, the Soviet Union once again intervenes and defeats a revolt in a member state. As the Red Army cracks down on protesters in Czechoslovakia, thousands flee the country and settle in Western Europe. Although NATO doesn't intervene, the events help shape regular large-scale military exercises such as Reforger.

Crowds block the streets of Prague to halt Soviet tanks occupying the city's public spaces

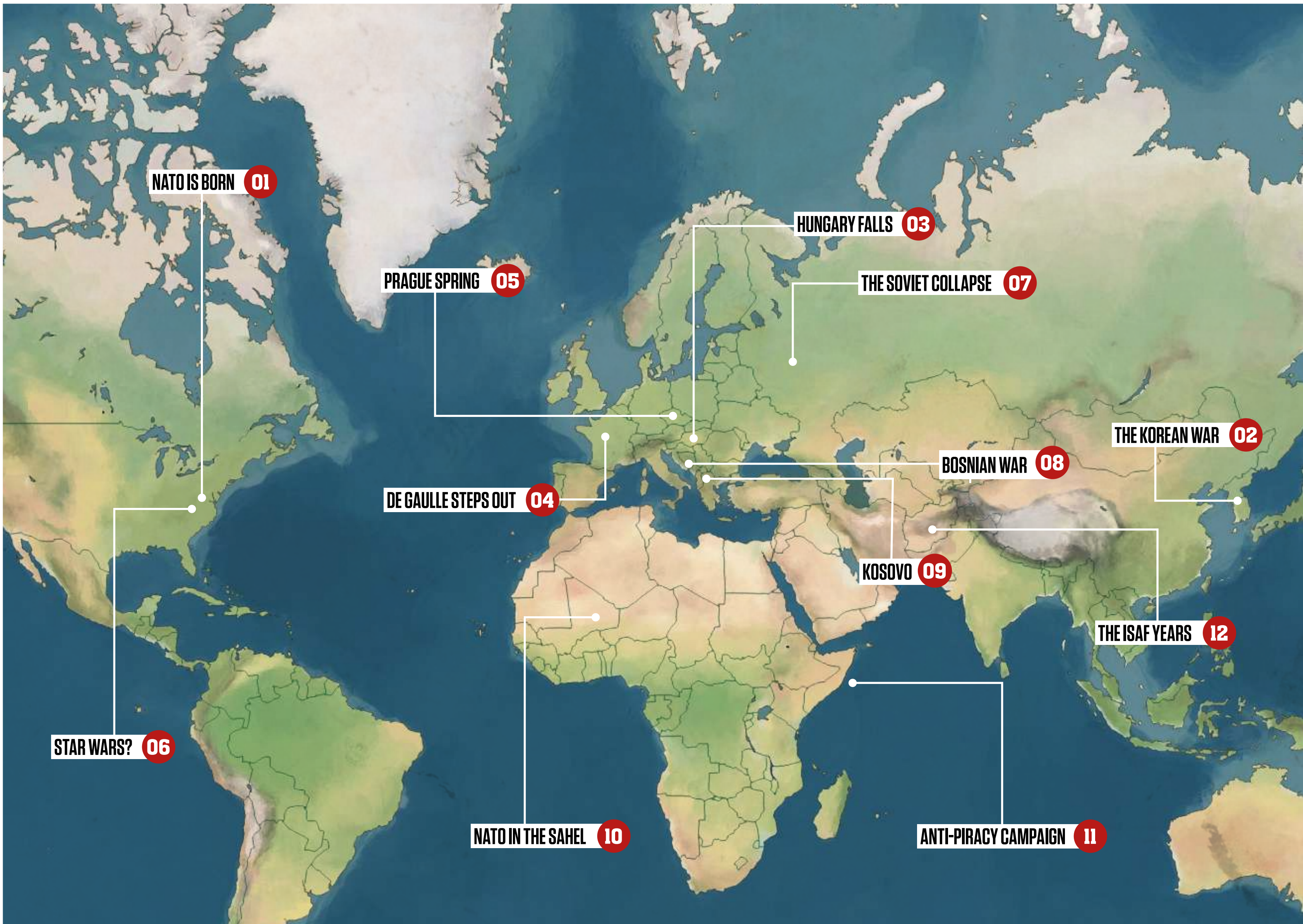
1964-82

THE BREZHNEV DOCTRINE

Utterly convinced of an impending NATO assault on the Warsaw Pact, Premier Leonid Brezhnev pushes back by expanding the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Moscow's influence spreads as far as Central America. All this is done at the cost of long-term economic stagnation.

In the last dozen years of his Soviet premiership Brezhnev diverts vast resources to communist proxies such as Fidel Castro's Cuba

All images © Getty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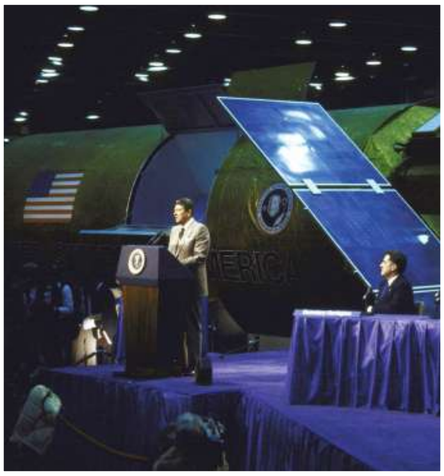
> “OPERATION ALLIED FORCE IS THE CODENAME FOR NATO BOMBING OF YUGOSLAVIA, IN RESPONSE TO SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC’S MASS MURDER AND ETHNIC CLEANSING”

1983-88

STAR WARS? 06

As part of a reinvigorated confrontational strategy against the Soviet Union, a cutting-edge anti-ballistic missile defence network is announced by the United States in what becomes a comical ruse – with astonishing results. The Strategic Defence Initiative, dubbed ‘Star Wars’, turns out to be a fictitious military project that convinces the Soviets that they can never win the arms race.



US President Ronald Reagan in front of a mock up of an orbital space station

18 August – 31 December 1991

THE SOVIET COLLAPSE 07

With its economy in tatters and the Warsaw Pact extinct, political discontent triggers an unsuccessful coup d’etat in Moscow by Soviet hardliners to topple Mikhail Gorbachev. Although it fails, the consequence is the dissolution of the Soviet Union into a ‘commonwealth’ of newly independent republics and further economic chaos in Russia.

Even as tanks surround the Kremlin a shambolic popular resistance ensures the Soviets loose their final gamble

KOSOVO 09

Operation Allied Force is the codename for NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, in response to Slobodan Milosevic's mass murder and ethnic cleansing carried out in the region. Predominantly US aircraft conduct 38,004 sorties during the operation, which results in Milosevic withdrawing his forces.

An aerial view of the French aircraft carrier Foch sailing in the Adriatic Sea as part of NATO operations in the region

THE ISAF YEARS 12

NATO assumes control over the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan by 2003. Contingents from allied countries are devoted to defeating terrorist groups, and carrying out humanitarian and development work, that helps keep the Afghan government in power until 2021.

Over 150,000 British forces are deployed across two decades

Canadian helicopter Sea-King taking part in operations off the Somalian coast, 2010

ANTI-PIRACY CAMPAIGN 11

Operation Ocean Shield is the codename of NATO's contribution to policing the waters off the Somali coastline, the Horn of Africa. NATO members provide navy patrol vessels on a rotational basis, covering a total operational area of approximately two million square miles.

1992 – 2004

24 March – 10 June 1999

2013-21

2009-16

2001-21

BOSNIAN WAR 08

NATO forces initially enforce UN sanctions on former Yugoslavia via naval blockades, the first codenamed Operation Maritime Monitor, then through a no-fly zone of Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO troops are deployed on the ground to oversee the Dayton Agreement peace treaty that ends the war.

A soldier of the French Army stands guard at an observation point on Mount Igman, overlooking Sarajevo, 1995

NATO IN THE SAHEL 10

Blowback from the collapse of the Muammar Gaddafi regime in Libya triggers a civil war in Mali that is defeated by a timely French intervention called Operation Serval, which was followed by Operation Barkhane. The campaign lasts nine years, and from 2020 onward 11 other European countries, international peacekeepers and a token US special forces presence all contribute.

Although not a NATO mission, the French-led Operation Barkhane involved special forces from different NATO militaries

All images © Getty

AN IRON CURTAIN

The origins of the alliance lie in the wake of WWII, where the victors in the West sought to secure a lasting peace through fresh alliances and treaties to defend against any potential aggression from the USSR

From 1945 onward the challenge of rebuilding a devastated Europe was so vast that US President Harry Truman's administration struggled to devise a strategy for the continent, which by 1946 had 60 million refugees, with 14 million displaced in Germany alone. But there remained critical voices from within and without Washington DC, such as the former isolationist and Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg, who urged a firm American commitment – a commitment that required the huge costs to be shared by the Allies. This approach was also proposed by former Secretary of War George C Marshall in a speech at Harvard on 5 June 1947.

An even earlier proponent was Winston Churchill who, after losing re-election as prime minister, devoted himself to writing and public speaking. In the post-war years he was adamant about the threat posed by the Soviet Union. "Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its communist international organisation intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, to their expansive and proselytising tendencies," he declared to an American audience on 5 March 1946. The famous 'Iron Curtain' speech described the outline of a cold war that had begun, even if it was not recognised as such yet.

"All the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe – Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia – all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere," Churchill told the students gathered at Westminster College. "And all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but… increasing measure of control from Moscow."

Churchill's apprehension toward Moscow reflected an emerging consensus among the Allies of the Second World War. Just a month earlier, on 2 February 1946, the US ambassador to Moscow George Kennan sent his famous 'long telegram' to the Secretary of State in which he explained the growing hostility of the Soviet Union to the West.

According to Kennan, the Kremlin thought "it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure". Kennan believed it was vital for the United States to begin containing Soviet power. His words were not just prophetic but deeply troubling, as civil unrest swept the fragile countries of Europe.

> **"CHURCHILL'S APPREHENSION TOWARD MOSCOW REFLECTED AN EMERGING CONSENSUS AMONG THE ALLIES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR"**

In Czechoslovakia a nascent democracy was snuffed out by the communists, and in Greece a civil war had broken out pitting yet another weak government against a Marxist rebellion. The US had no intention of getting involved but was fully prepared to support Athens and by extension the non-aligned Turkish Republic that faced its own communist threat, in what became known as the 'Truman Doctrine'. When taken together with the lifting of the Berlin Blockade imposed by the Soviets, whose goal was evicting the British, French and American troops in the capital, American foreign policy rose to the challenge.

The first crucial step was a common defence agreement on 17 March 1948, called the Brussels Treaty, involving France and the UK as well as several smaller states. This became a template for the Truman administration's own moves to forge a permanent trans-Atlantic alliance. After a series of conferences, representatives from 12 countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into existence on 4 April 1949.

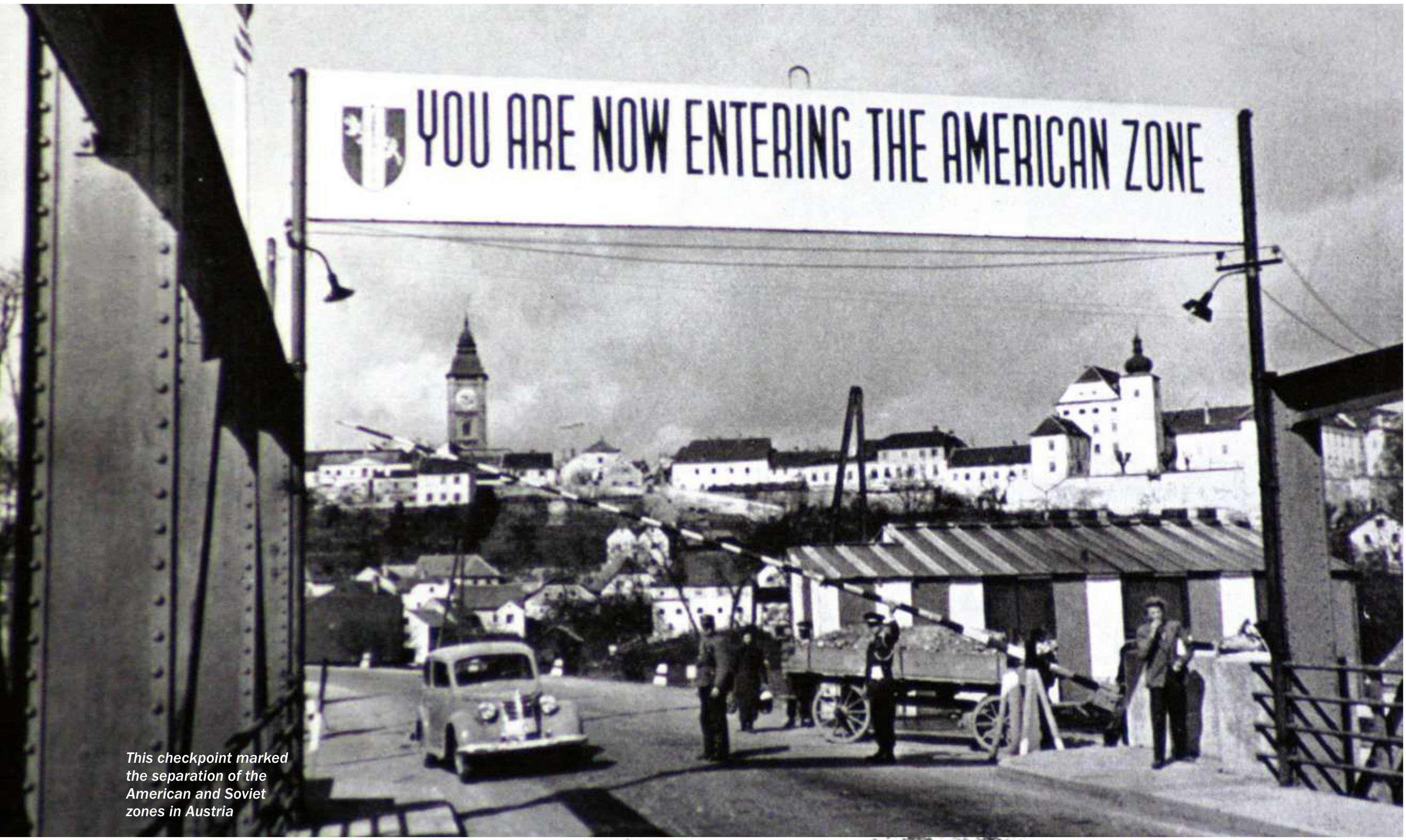
Yet the alliance immediately faced multiple crises. The foreign policies of Britain and France were troubled as they grappled with the loss of their colonial empires, and the steep costs of post-war reconstruction inflicted crushing austerity throughout Europe. For convenience, NATO's original headquarters – named SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) – was established in Paris on 1951, where it overlooked the Eiffel Tower. But a rift between Charles de Gaulle and the alliance in 1966 forced its transfer to Brussels. This surprising rift at the highest levels of NATO was fuelled by anxiety over another world war in Europe that could escalate to the use of nuclear weapons. The problem was best encapsulated by Dr Jamie Shea, the former deputy assistant secretary general of NATO, when he posed the question: "If France could no longer rely upon the American nuclear bomb to protect French territory, then why would not France wish to acquire a bomb of its own for that purpose?"

Eventually, the growing strength of NATO, along with the Korean War pitting the Soviet bloc versus a multinational force under the United Nations, compelled Moscow to lay the groundwork for its own alliance network. The Warsaw Pact, between the Soviet Union and seven Soviet satellite states in Europe, came into existence on 14 May 1955.

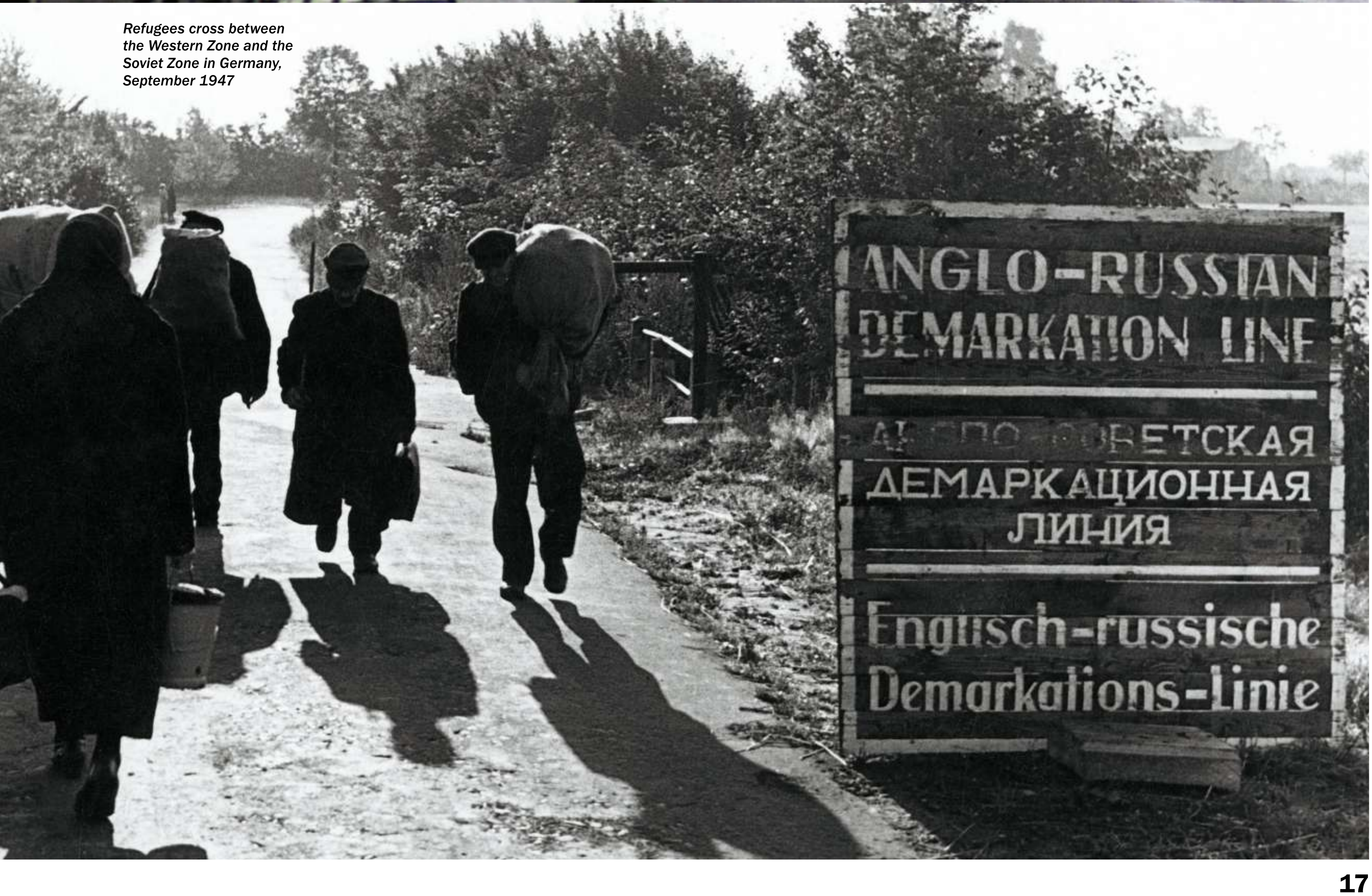
***Below:** Foreign ministers meet in Paris to discuss amending the 1948 Brussels Treaty and admit West Germany and Italy*

Belgium
Canada
France
Germany
Italy
Luxembourg
Netherlands
United Kingdom
United States

Images © Getty


YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE AMERICAN ZONE

This checkpoint marked the separation of the American and Soviet zones in Austria


ANGLO-RUSSIAN
DEMARKATION LINE
АНГЛО-СОВЕТСКАЯ
ДЕМАРКАЦИОННАЯ
ЛИНИЯ
Englisch-russische
Demarkations-Linie

Refugees cross between the Western Zone and the Soviet Zone in Germany, September 1947

THE REFORGER ERA

With the Cold War showing no signs of ending, NATO's forces were on constant alert and training for any potential invasion of Western Europe

As the Cold War progressed, the threat of an offensive by the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc allies was the paramount concern for NATO, whose HQ moved to Brussels, Belgium, in 1967. To prepare for this eventuality the United States along with Belgium, France, the Netherlands, West Germany and the United Kingdom organised the Return of Forces to Germany exercises, aka REFORGER. The rationale behind it was to practise the air bridge for bringing full US Army divisions to the European mainland and then the West German plains, where the Warsaw Pact's main invasion force could break out.

In the recollection of one Cold War veteran, Colonel Matthew Morton (Ret), the importance of REFORGER was the logistics behind it. "The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia only months earlier [in August 1968] helped bring into focus the inability of the US to get back to Europe in a timely manner with a force that could fight," he explains. REFORGER played to the strengths of America's massive airlifting resources. Since the original REFORGER was launched in 1969 its initial goal was moving the equivalent of an entire corps-size formation, whose total numbers ranged from 50,000 to 100,000 personnel, using a combination of C-5 and C-141 transports and civilian airliners. A twist to this type of operation happened in 1983 when the US Army practised the movement of 19,000 troops by plane in complete radio silence.

Pre-positioned stocks of equipment kept in the Netherlands and Belgium enabled the same troops to refit immediately and begin the drive to West Germany. The importance of the yearly REFORGER exercise grew over time as events confirmed the belligerence of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact. In 1956 the Soviet Red Army had stormed Hungary to quash an uprising by reformists who wanted a less restrictive government; a decade later the same was done to Czechoslovakia.

Other conflicts, such as the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the North Vietnamese triumph over the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, confirmed how Soviet arms could overcome Western allies. In the case of the Yom Kippur War a last-minute US airlift called Operation Nickel Grass helped replenish the beleaguered Israel Defense Forces so they could settle the conflict with the Soviet-backed Egyptians and Syrians on advantageous terms.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 onward was another grim reminder that even non-aligned countries were at its mercy. It is important to note Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland stayed out of NATO while Yugoslavia and Albania had no ties with the Warsaw Pact.

The Soviet threat did not wane under the leadership of Premier Leonid Brezhnev, whose approach to foreign policy was unconditional support for communist states everywhere. This ruthless worldview was dubbed the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' and motivated a rapid Soviet arms build up and the Warsaw Pact assault on Czechoslovakia in 1968. As the Group of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG) kept growing throughout the 1980s, when it reached 600,000 troops garrisoned in Central Europe, it was imperative NATO respond. The Soviet armed forces held regular Zapad (meaning 'west') exercises to display its firepower and the annual REFORGER exercises served as a potent declaration of NATO's resolve to protect peace in Europe.

> "IN 1956 THE SOVIET RED ARMY HAD STORMED HUNGARY TO QUASH AN UPRISING BY REFORMISTS WHO WANTED A LESS RESTRICTIVE GOVERNMENT. A DECADE LATER THE SAME WAS DONE TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA"

***Left:** A German Leopard tank. NATO forces were outnumbered by the Warsaw Pact but had more advanced munitions and command and control systems*

By 1979 a crucial addition that made REFORGER more intimidating was the arrival of third-generation main battle tanks, such as West Germany's Leopard 2, and American attack helicopters like the AH-1 Cobra and the AH-64 Apache. These gunships were designed to pick apart the

A NATO soldier sets up a collimator sight for a howitzer during REFORGER 1985

Warsaw Pact's armoured thrusts with Hellfire missiles by flying low and using tree lines for concealment before firing. NATO advantages in command and control and precision guided munitions also helped offset the numerical advantage of the Warsaw Pact.

In the late 1970s it became habitual for NATO HQ to emphasise the yawning balance of forces over Europe. NATO estimates drawn up in 1975 indicated by 1980 the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact would have up to 60,000 tanks readied for a near-future conflict and between 19,000 and 20,000 tanks massed in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Total Eastern Bloc manpower in 1980 reached six million compared to just 4.5 million among the NATO allies. This was augmented by 2,460 fixed-wing combat aircraft, multitudes of helicopters and perhaps the most advanced air defence network ever devised – this too was solely reliant on Soviet missiles and radars. The maritime domain was a bit more encouraging as the US Navy's carrier battle groups and nuclear attack submarines meant the Atlantic Ocean could be secured against any Soviet encroachment.

On the ground, NATO forces evened the odds through the widespread adoption of anti-tank missiles and vehicles designed to carry them. The British Army's Striker vehicle, which carried Swingfire anti-tank missiles, along with the West German Bundeswehr's Jaguar and the US Army's M901 TOW, helped improve the range and power of NATO's tank formations.

As successful as REFORGER became, it only emphasised the cohesion of the NATO allies on top of the ultimate backstop for Western Europe: the US Air Force's tactical nuclear weapons. International security expert Oliver Meier describes how this fearsome stockpile was the free world's ultimate line of defence: "As the Cold War ended, about 4,000 US tactical nuclear weapons remained on European soil, intended to offset Soviet conventional and nuclear forces."

Images © Alamy

A GLOBAL STANDOFF

In the West the NATO alliance has been variously viewed as a necessary bulwark against communism but also a relic of the 1940s

James F Dunnigan is among the true originals of old-school desktop war gaming, albeit repurposed for the nuclear age. This gives him a breadth of firsthand and even personal knowledge of the 20th century's greatest military confrontation that pitted NATO against the Warsaw Pact. An accomplished author and historian, among his works are *How To Make War* and *Digital Soldiers*. He is the co-author of *Dirty Little Secrets of the Vietnam War* and the founder of the military news website *StrategyPage*. In this exclusive interview he revisits the founding of the NATO alliance and what made it a success.

Was the Soviet Union's main criticism of NATO, that it posed an immediate threat to Moscow and its own allies, a valid one?
Russia was given the benefit of the doubt at the end of World War II when they were given a free hand in Eastern Europe in return for assurances that there would be free elections. Post-1991 documents from the Russian archives showed that Stalin ordered their man Kim il Sung to invade South Korea and unite Korea. When that did not work Russia ordered China to rescue the North Koreans. China complied and told Russia that the Chinese "debt was paid" to Russia for assistance in the 1949 CCP (Chinese Communist Party) conquest of China.

Was there absolute certainty that a 'hot war' between the former West Germany and East Germany would lead to nuclear war?
The Russians thought so and detailed why in unclassified books distributed to Russian commanders to prepare them for the use of nukes or chemical weapons. West Germany was upset, but they had read the Russian books as well.

What was the significance of the Fulda Gap and why did it become the focus of NATO commanders for decades?
Fulda was the most convenient route for invading Russian forces. There were other routes that would be used but if Fulda could be blocked it would do much damage to Russian offensive plans.

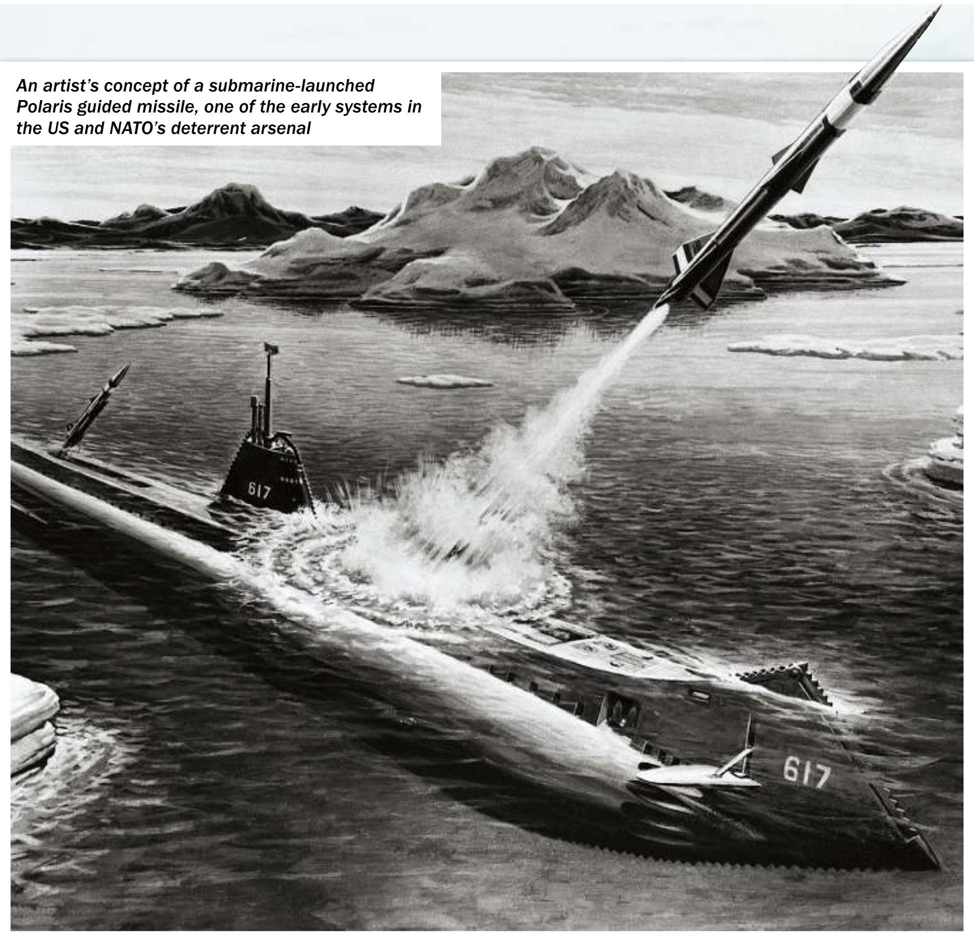
Are you familiar with the NATO program known as 'Gladio'? Outside multilateral exercises, how serious were NATO preparations for conventional war versus the Warsaw Pact?
This was the result of WWII experience as documented by the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] and SOE [Special Operations Executive]. This led to the formation of the CIA and US Army Special Forces at the start of the Cold War. New NATO members in Eastern Europe adopted the same stay-behind tactics when Russia again became a threat after 2000.

Was NATO effective in protecting its own members from subversion? Especially when the Soviets fomented 'underground' terrorist groups in West Germany and Italy?
NATO tolerated the existence of terrorist training facilities in Eastern Europe and Russia because there was not much they could do except complain to the USSR, which was pointless. The Russians were even more successful in promoting non-violent protest groups, especially in Western Europe. The extent of this activity was not discovered until after 1991.

What were the technological advantages of NATO's militaries that offset the conventional strength of the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact?
Western tech was something the Russians feared more than anything else. They saw it

HMS Resolution, pictured c.1970, was the first nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine to be equipped with Polaris missiles confirmed in the 1970s with laser-guided bombs and superior electronics in American combat and support aircraft. At sea they noted that their SSBNs [ballistic missile submarines] were almost tracked by an American SSN [submarine].

The extent of this fear became obvious to the West before 1991 as more Russian and Warsaw Pact pilots defected with their aircraft. The Russians were able to get new consumer gadgets back to Russia, some of them via diplomatic pouch because of restrictions placed on the export to the USSR of a growing number of American non-military tech. Reagan was the first American president to take full advantage of that with a largely fictional anti-ballistic missile system that the Russians believed was real. After 1991 the extent of this tech-fear became obvious and examples of Russian tech got to the West for examination. The Russians were several decades behind the West. The Chernobyl disaster in 1986 demonstrated that, especially in how the Russians tried to hide it at first.


An artist's concept of a submarine-launched Polaris guided missile, one of the early systems in the US and NATO's deterrent arsenal

Was the concept that became known as Air-Land Battle sufficient to deter the Warsaw Pact? Or did it only prove itself in Operation Desert Storm?

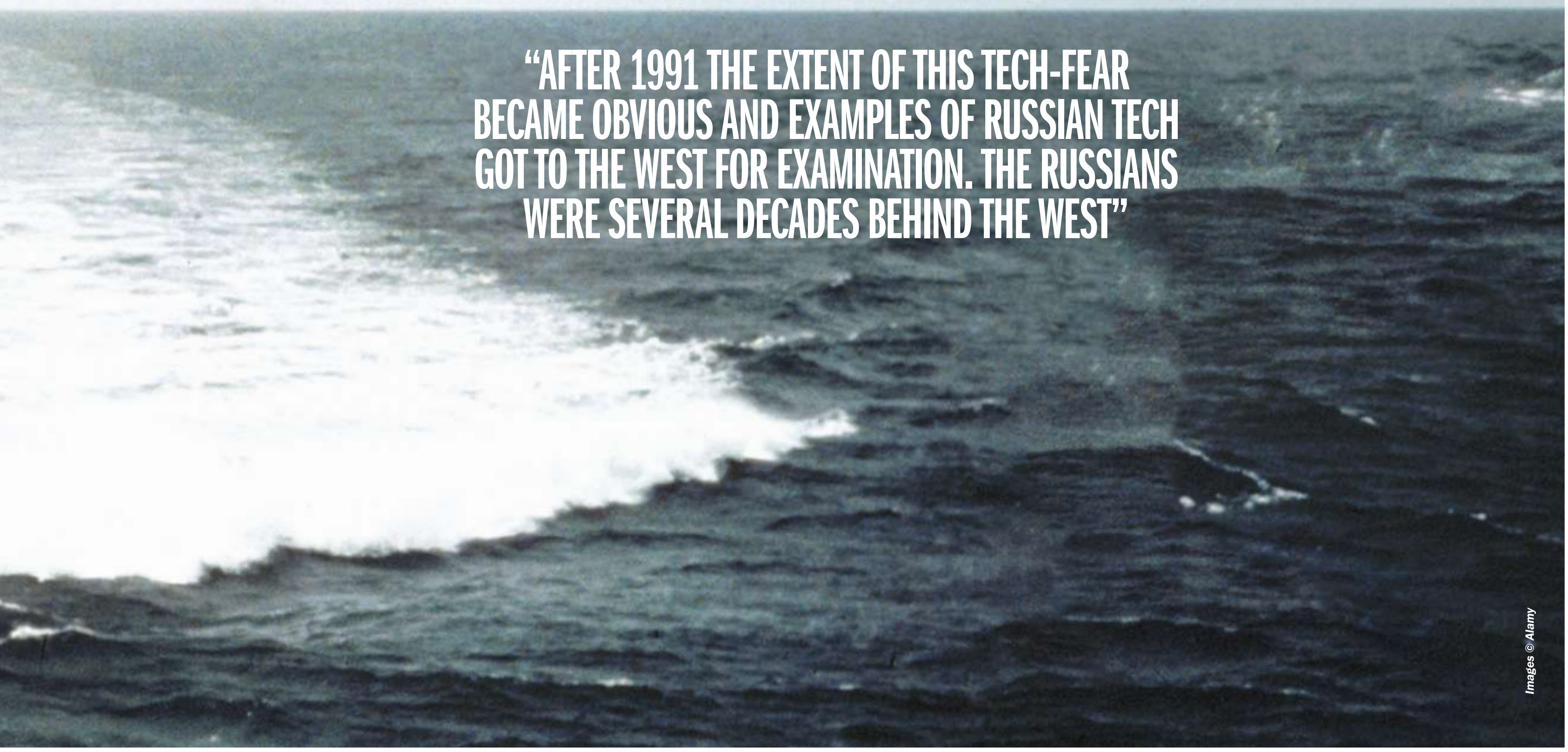
The Russians believed Air-Land Battle was an example of how much post-Vietnam military reforms had turned NATO defence plans into an offensive opportunity for NATO that made any Russian attack less likely to succeed and vulnerable to a NATO invasion of East Europe. The 1991 Iraq War certainly confirmed it.

In hindsight, what aspects of the Warsaw Pact were overestimated once the Cold War came to an end?

The ability of Warsaw Pact governments to withstand growing domestic opposition. Part of this was the crackdown in Eastern Europe after the uprisings of the 1950s and 60s. Western intel officials interviewed many of those civilians getting out and thought the refugees were exaggerating. They weren't and that became obvious in 1989, and after that in the USSR itself.

What aspect of the NATO alliance proved more robust and durable come the 1990s?

At first the inevitability of Yugoslavia coming apart and the eagerness of East European nations to join NATO and the EU. The East Europeans warned that Russia remained a threat and after the 1990s that became real. Russia needed a foreign threat and NATO expansion was 'proof' despite the fact that the new Eastern Europe – the Baltics, Bulgaria, the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania – wanted to join for the mutual-defence aspect to prevent another 1939/40 disaster.



> “AFTER 1991 THE EXTENT OF THIS TECH-FEAR BECAME OBVIOUS AND EXAMPLES OF RUSSIAN TECH GOT TO THE WEST FOR EXAMINATION. THE RUSSIANS WERE SEVERAL DECADES BEHIND THE WEST”

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AFGHANISTAN ODYSSEY

Article 5 of the alliance's treaty, which states an attack on one member is an attack on the whole, has only been invoked once

After the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Department of Defense in Washington DC the Bush administration announced plans for a global campaign against Al Qaeda and its network of allies. Rather than extend the previous Clinton administration's counter-terrorism policies of limited punitive strikes, President Bush's cabinet built a consensus for attacking Afghanistan to root out the masterminds behind 9/11 in what became Operation Enduring Freedom.

The US opened its campaign in Afghanistan with special forces raids and the insertion of CIA operatives among local resistance factions dubbed the Northern Alliance, but once the Taliban were ousted by late October a new mission was drawn up. It went far beyond just a token deployment of US forces to secure the capital Kabul and drew the NATO alliance into its most controversial role. This began as a United Nations mandate for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), whose primary objective was to secure the seat of Afghanistan's new government. From 2003 onward, however, ISAF was put under direct NATO command and the intervention grew well beyond an 'Article 5' consensus. Even countries outside the alliance participated such as Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine while Australia, Mongolia, Singapore and South Korea contributed special forces on rotation.

More than just a defensive action against a credible threat – global terrorism based in Central Asia – the NATO alliance's involvement in Afghanistan belonged to a brief era where militaries became the preferred tool for establishing a viable democracy in a failed

A French sniper pictured near Kabul during a joint patrol with Afghan police, November 2002 state. To this end as many as 250,000 troops from the France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK as well as contingents from newer NATO allies such as Poland and Romania deployed across Afghanistan. Their mission was to either defeat local terrorists or organise the basic necessities of a functioning government, or in NATO's own official record, "to create the conditions whereby the Afghan government would be able to exercise its authority throughout the country".

The ISAF that emerged in 2003 was a true multinational force tasked with a grand mission and perhaps this is where its problems originated. The US military and its NATO allies, including 150,000 British troops who served across two decades, enjoyed an overwhelming tactical advantage over their opponents the Taliban and myriad terror groups such as Al Qaeda remnants, the Haqqani Network and eventually the Islamic State. However, its mandate to build a plural and representative government in Afghanistan was far from straightforward. This long-term project that required billions of dollars each year, with American 'security assistance' from 2002 until 2021 totalling $88 billion, turned problematic when the country's domestic security kept unravelling.

"THE ISAF THAT EMERGED IN 2003 WAS A TRUE MULTINATIONAL FORCE TASKED WITH A GRAND MISSION AND PERHAPS THIS IS WHERE ITS PROBLEMS ORIGINATED"

In 2009 one NATO commander, Lieutenant General Jim Dutton, admitted that efforts to subdue the Taliban in Helmand Province were a "stalemate". This happened because of a long-standing hindrance: NATO forces deployed anywhere inside Afghanistan and propped up the government at all levels, yet insurgents had the liberty of safe havens in neighbouring Pakistan. Such an absurd dynamic meant a low-intensity civil war dragged on for years and created a patchwork state where major populations remained under the control of Afghan and NATO troops while smaller districts in the interior and borderlands were either directly or indirectly governed by the Taliban.

The long involvement in Afghanistan remains significant as it marked the farthest extent of NATO's power and a troubling episode where NATO's ideals did not live up to the reality on the ground. Even when successful elections were organised these launched petty warlords to high office – warlords who dominated the government of President Ashraf Ghani, the last 'free' leader of Afghanistan until the Taliban swept into Kabul on 15 August 2021. "The US should have focused on ensuring that these elections were legitimate for the Afghan people, avoiding US Secretary of State John Kerry's multiple interventions when they were deemed too fraudulent," observed NATO's former deputy Dr Jamie Shea. The final NATO mission in Afghanistan followed days after when a mass evacuation of Kabul was hastily organised at its main airport. In two weeks 120,000 civilians were airlifted out of the country.

An Afghan fighter watches as US jets bomb Al Qaeda's Tora Bora mountain hideout, December 2001

Images © Getty

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

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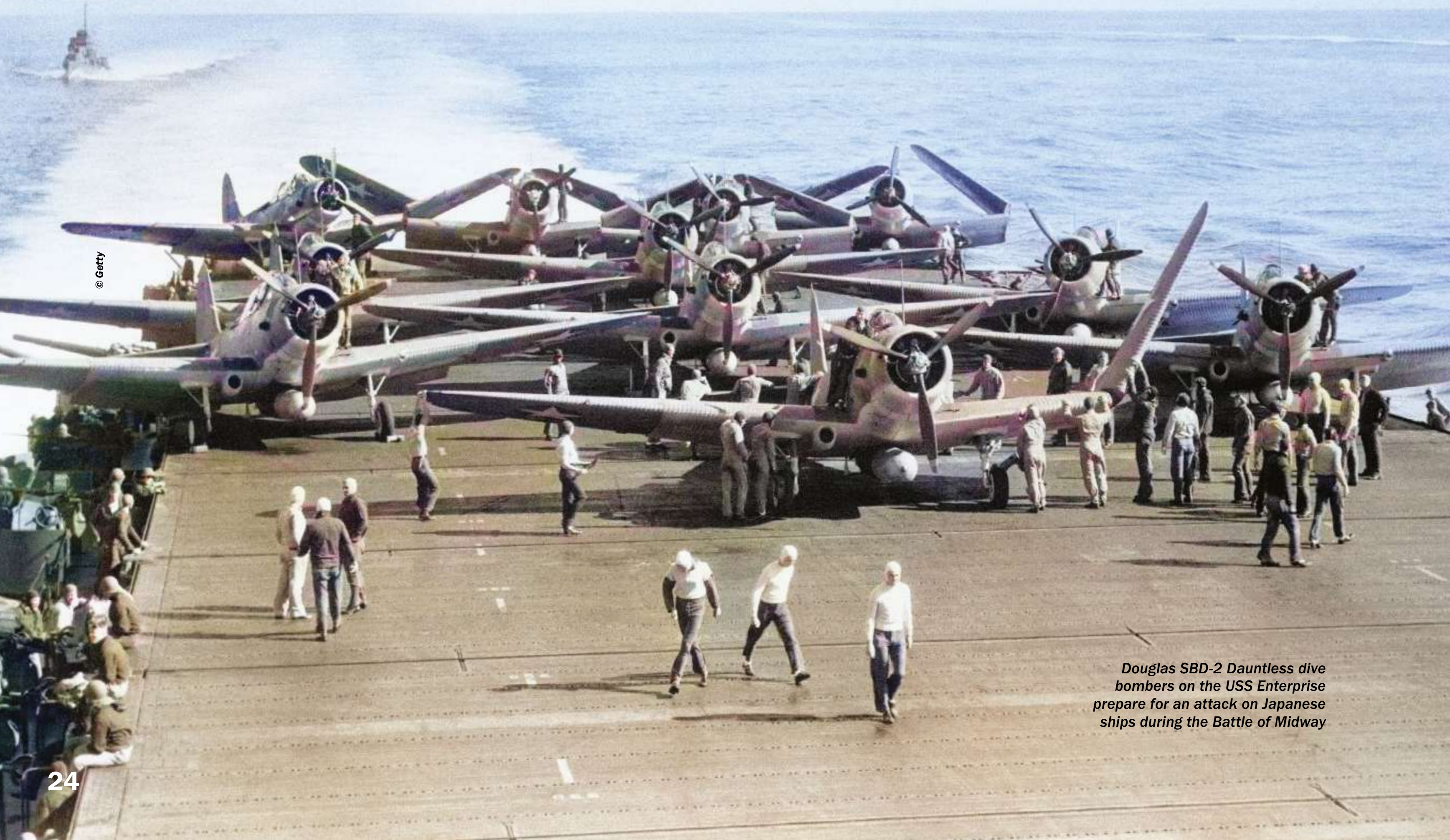
TURNING POINT OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Just six months after Pearl Harbor, Japan launched another attack on the US Navy. James Holland explains how this time the US was prepared and the resulting clash turned the tide of the war

WORDS **NICK SOLDINGER**



© Getty

Douglas SBD-2 Dauntless dive bombers on the USS Enterprise prepare for an attack on Japanese ships during the Battle of Midway

By 1942, the war appeared to be going well for Japan. Since its attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, it had conquered a series of territories throughout Asia and the Pacific. In quick succession, it had seized Hong Kong and Malaya from the British, overrun large parts of the Dutch East Indies and had chased the Americans out of the Philippines. In doing so, it had plundered many of the resources it would need to continue the expansion of its empire. However, one major obstacle still needed to be overcome.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of Japan's Combined Fleet, had masterminded the surprise strike against Pearl Harbor but he was well aware that, despite its successes, it had failed to achieve its key objectives. "In the Pacific War, aircraft carriers were to replace battleships as the pre-eminent warship," says historian and author James Holland. "Even before Pearl Harbor Yamamoto recognised this and, even though he thought the war was a mistake, he figured that if Japan was to have any chance of winning it'd need to knock out the US fleet, in particular its carriers.

"Once it had, it would have sufficient breathing space to grab the territories and resources it needed, leaving America little choice but to come to a peaceful compromise. At least, that had been the plan. But it was very much a case of job half done at Pearl Harbor, because the US carriers were absent. After the attack, with the Americans rearming at a rate the Japanese could never match, Yamamoto knew that a decisive hammer blow still needed to be dealt against the US and it needed to be dealt quickly. For Japan, it was a complete race against time."

Yamamoto believed that if he could lure the US carriers out of their safe base at Pearl Harbor into a decisive battle on the open sea, the Imperial Japanese Navy would be able to sink them. The question was, however, what could possibly provoke the Americans into making such a risky move?

Yamamoto's plan

Midway Atoll is a 2.3 square-mile (six-square-kilometre) scrap of volcanic land marooned in the vast blue of the Pacific Ocean. Consisting largely of two tiny, flat islands called Sand and Eastern, it lies 1,073 miles (1,728 kilometres) west of Pearl Harbor, roughly halfway between San Francisco and Tokyo. By the outbreak of World War II, it was one of the US military's most western outposts.

This made it vital both as a defensive asset for the US West Coast and as a staging post for Allied ships and aircraft headed into the Pacific theatre. "By the early summer of 1942, Yamamoto believed Midway with its airstrip held the key," says Holland. "He thought, rightly, that the Americans would defend it to the hilt."

Yamamoto planned to seize Midway in a surprise attack that would take place in three phases. First, his carrier fleet, known as Kido Butai, under Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, would attack Midway by air with aircraft from its four powerful flattops: Soryu, Hiryu, Kaga and its flagship Akagi. Once Midway's defences were destroyed, a 5,000-strong invasion force would then be brought in by a second fleet of ships commanded by Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo. Expecting the US to then send everything it could to repel the invaders, Yamamoto's total force of around 200 warships would then converge on Midway from across the Pacific to crush what was left of the US Pacific Fleet.

Yamamoto expected his plan to deliver a decisive victory for Japan and establish another strategically important foothold in the Pacific, finally forcing America into submission. It was an audacious gamble and it might have worked had Yamamoto enjoyed the kind of secrecy he'd had before attacking Pearl Harbor. But the sleeping giant, as he'd once famously described the US, was no longer slumbering. It was wide awake and keeping a close eye on his every move.

US codebreakers and Midway

In March 1942, in a dank basement below Pearl Harbor known as the dungeon, a team of cryptographers led by Captain Joseph Rochefort had largely broken the secret code used by the Japanese Navy in its radio transmissions. For months they had been monitoring and deciphering every message they'd intercepted and were fully aware that the Japanese were planning an attack.

They even knew many of the plan's specifics, including the fact that there was to be a smaller, possibly diversionary, assault on the Aleutian Islands west of Alaska. The main objective, however, remained a mystery as it was only ever referred to by the Japanese as 'AF'. So, as the date of the planned attack got closer, Rochefort's team took a chance. On 20 May, a fake dispatch about water shortages on Midway was sent out. As hoped, it was picked up by Tokyo Naval Intelligence who forwarded it with one slight alteration, declaring 'AF' to be short of water. In doing so, they confirmed Midway as the intended target. Rochefort

"YAMAMOTO KNEW THAT A DECISIVE HAMMER BLOW STILL NEEDED TO BE DEALT AGAINST THE US AND IT NEEDED TO BE DEALT QUICKLY"

Below: *The Midway Atoll was a vital defensive asset for the US and a staging post for Allied ships and aircraft. The Japanese planned to seize it in a surprise attack*

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Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto thought war with the United States was a mistake and that sinking its aircraft carriers was Japan's only chance of victory

© Alamy

immediately reported what he'd discovered to Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander-in-chief of the US Pacific Fleet, who hurriedly started drawing up his own plan.

When the Japanese attacked, Nimitz decided he would engage them mainly from the air, keeping the three carriers he had available split into two groups and well out of striking distance of the Japanese ships. The first group, Task Force 17, was led by Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher and consisted of two cruisers and the carrier USS Yorktown. The second group, Task Force 16, was led by Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance and included the aircraft carriers Enterprise and Hornet plus six cruisers.

By the beginning of June, Nimitz's trap was set. Rather than being holed up in Pearl Harbor as the Japanese believed, his aircraft carriers were lying in wait 348 miles (560km) north of Midway with the Kido Butai steaming unwittingly towards them.

Dawn, 4 June 1942

The Kido Butai carrier fleet, commanded by Admiral Nagumo, is approximately 149 miles (240km) northwest of Midway, and is forming the spearhead of the Japanese attack. Yamamoto splits his force into several fleets and scatters them across the Pacific. The day before, a US patrol plane sighted Kondo's invasion force 497 miles (800km) south of Midway, while Yamamoto was with the main force a further 600 miles (965km) to the west. His reason for doing this was to both avoid detection as well as appear under-strength.

According to Holland, however, this created two big problems for him: "First, the various fleets can't communicate except by radio, which means any message they send runs the risk of being intercepted and decrypted. Secondly, by trying to mask what he's up to by keeping his full force so spread out, his ships are too far apart to be mutually supportive. It's a massive blunder."

4.30am

Nagumo orders the airstrike against Midway to begin. Within ten minutes, 108 aircraft, including A6M 'Zero' fighters, D3A 'Val' dive bombers and B5N 'Kate' torpedo-bombers have swarmed into the air and are headed towards the atoll.

At around the same time, the Americans, aware of what is coming, launch their own attacks. Taking off from Midway, a force of over 50 bombers, including Grumman TBF Avengers, Martin B-26 Marauders, Douglas SBD-2 Dauntlesses, Vought SB2U Vindicators and B-17 Flying Fortresses sets off to attack the Japanese carriers.

5.56am

The haunting wail of Midway's air-raid siren announces the incoming Japanese planes. The base's fighters scramble. Six Grumman F4 Wildcats and 20 Brewster F2A Buffalos engage the Japanese, only to suffer devastating losses. Heavily outnumbered by the more agile Zeros, two Wildcats and 13 Buffalos are shot down.

6.16am

The Japanese bombers now hit both Eastern and Sand Island. Various facilities including oil tanks, the power plant, a seaplane hangar, the mess hall and the hospital are all hit. Of the 108 Japanese planes involved in the attack, 11 are destroyed and a further 14 are badly damaged, largely by ground fire. Crucially, however, they fail to inflict significant damage on the base's runway.

Nagumo's dilemma at Midway

7.05am

The raid's leader breaks radio silence to inform Nagumo that another air raid is needed to destroy the base's defences if a successful invasion is to take place. Having kept back roughly half of his planes in case of contact with the US carriers, Nagumo is now faced with a difficult decision. Does he send in

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Firefighters onboard the USS Yorktown battle to put out the fire after the ship was hit three times

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A Douglas SBD-2 Dauntless on the USS Hornet. The type played a pivotal role in the US victory

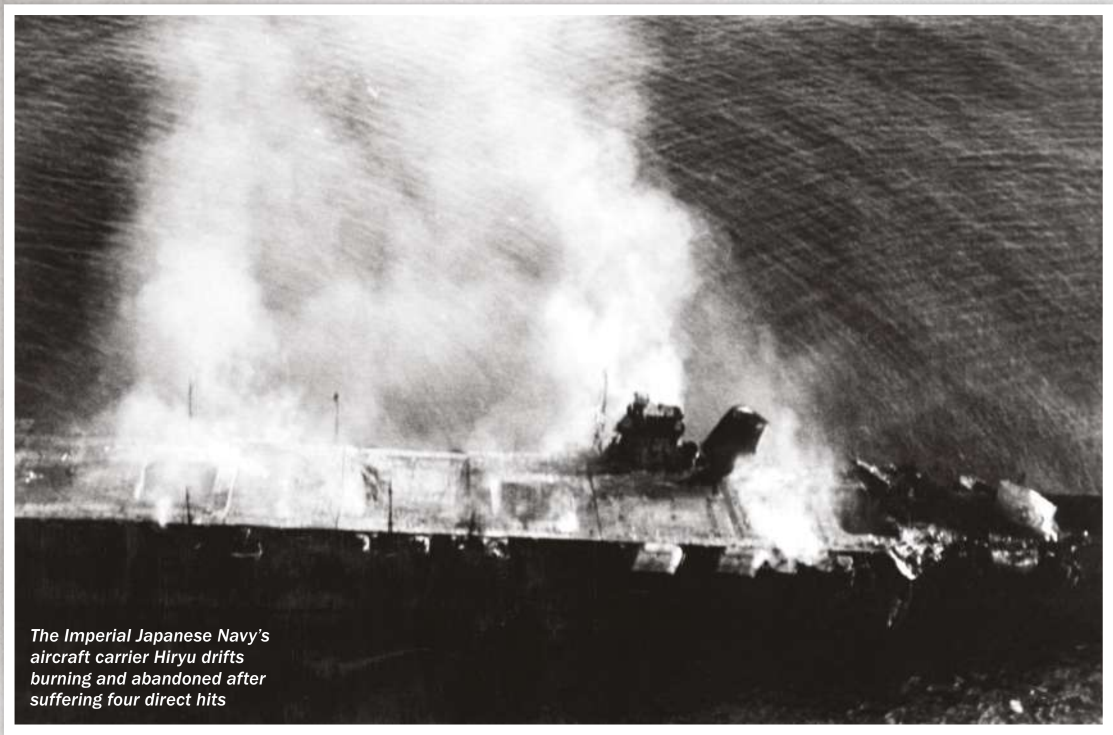
An American oil storage facility on Midway is destroyed by Japanese aircraft

© Getty

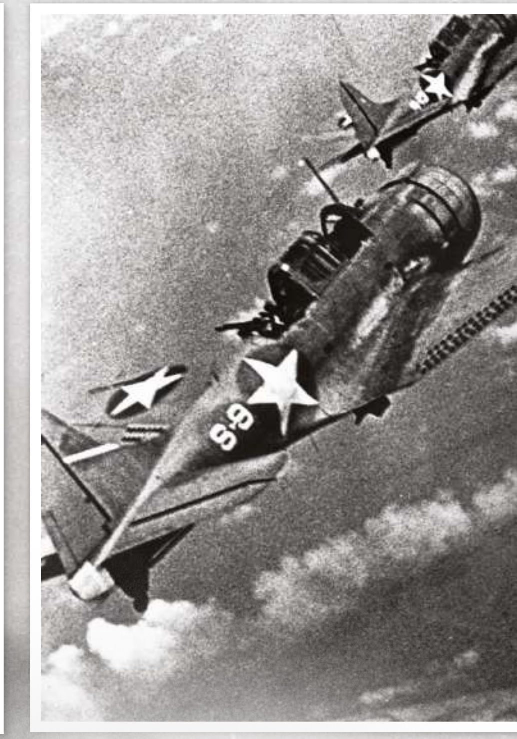
© Getty

“THE HAUNTING WAIL OF MIDWAY’S AIR-RAID SIREN ANNOUNCES THE INCOMING JAPANESE PLANES. THE BASE’S FIGHTERS SCRAMBLE. SIX GRUMMAN F4 WILDCATS AND 20 BREWSTER F2A BUFFALOS ENGAGE THE JAPANESE, ONLY TO SUFFER DEVASTATING LOSSES”

Despite suffering heavy losses, US aircraft inflicted catastrophic damage on Japan’s aircraft carriers during the Battle of Midway



The Imperial Japanese Navy's aircraft carrier Hiryu drifts burning and abandoned after suffering four direct hits



a second wave of aircraft to finish off Midway or does he hold them back as ordered in case of a sea battle?

As he gives the order for his reserve aircraft to be prepared for a second air raid, the US bomber force from Midway appears overhead and begins to attack his ships. It's the first indication that the Americans must have known about the attack and have prepared a trap; more evidence soon presents itself when Nagumo receives a report from a Japanese spotter plane that ten US warships are lurking in waters 240 miles (386km) north of Midway. He asks if any carriers are among them and waits for confirmation.

8:20am

With US planes continuing to attack his carriers, Nagumo finally receives the news he's been dreading – there is at least one carrier among the US ships north of Midway. He needs to launch an attack against this force immediately but he's ordered his reserve planes to be fitted with ordinance to hit land targets at Midway. Reversing this order they are now rearmed for a naval engagement, but the clock is ticking. The 97 planes from the initial raid on Midway are due to return at any minute. They will be low on fuel and if his flight decks aren't clear will have to ditch into the sea. He delays his carrier strike.

Five minutes that change history

9:15am

Just as the last of Nagumo's planes are returning from the Midway raid, a force of 15 US Devastator dive bombers is spotted closing in on his fleet. They are the first of more than 100 aircraft launched from the US carriers to attack the Japanese. Unescorted by fighters, all 15 are quickly shot down without inflicting any damage. As soon as this attack is over another one begins. This time, a force of 14 Devastators attack, again with heavy losses and no hits. Not long after, a third wave of planes appears. Made up of 12 Devastators and six Wildcats, this attack is also a complete failure as they're picked apart by Zeros and anti-aircraft fire.

10.22am

Seventeen Dauntless dive bombers now approach from the north while another 31 fly in from the south. Undetected and unopposed, a group of 30 dive on the Kaga from 19,000 feet, scoring four direct hits, one of which destroys the bridge and kills the captain.

Fires rage below decks and the fully fuelled and armed planes waiting in the hangars catch alight, causing a wave of secondary explosions to sweep through the ship. A force of 13 dive bombers now attacks the Soryu, hitting her flight deck three times and causing a chain of explosions to rip through her hangars. Just like the Kaga, she too is soon a raging inferno. Three bombers that had been headed for the

All images © Getty

Dauntless dive bombers fly over the burning wreck of a Japanese ship

Smoke billows from a badly damaged Japanese Mogami-class heavy cruiser

Kaga now switch targets and go after the Akagi. A bomb strikes a fully laden plane waiting on her deck and a chain of explosions now tears through Nogumo's flagship. Japan's carriers have been all but wiped out – only the Hiryu remains intact. "At 10.21am the Americans had been losing the battle, by 10.27am they're not only winning it, they're winning the war. It's arguably the most decisive few minutes in the history of the Second World War," says Holland.

The Japanese counterattack

11:00am

Having left his blazing flagship to the light cruiser Nagara, Nagumo finally orders the attack against the US ships that the constant American attacks have prevented him from launching. Eighteen Val dive bombers with an escort of six Zero fighters take off from the Hiryu. En route, they encounter a group of six Dauntless dive bombers returning to their carriers. The Zeros peel off to engag.

A short exchange follows and although no aircraft are lost on either side, the skirmish leaves two Zeros so damaged they have to return to the Hiryu. This unnecessary action also leaves the Val bombers without protection as the four remaining Zeros now desperately try to catch up with them as they close in on the US ships.

11.52am

USS Yorktown's radar picks up the incoming Val bomber group and 20 Wildcat fighters are scrambled to engage it. With its reduced fighter escort still lagging behind, the Wildcats rip through the heavier, more clumsy bombers. Seven are shot down before the Zeros can reach them and then, in the dogfight that follows, a further four Vals and three Zeros are lost for the cost of one Wildcat. There are now just seven Vals left to carry out the attack on the Yorktown. Splitting into two groups, three bombers now race towards the ship from the west while the other four weave through the flak from the southwest.

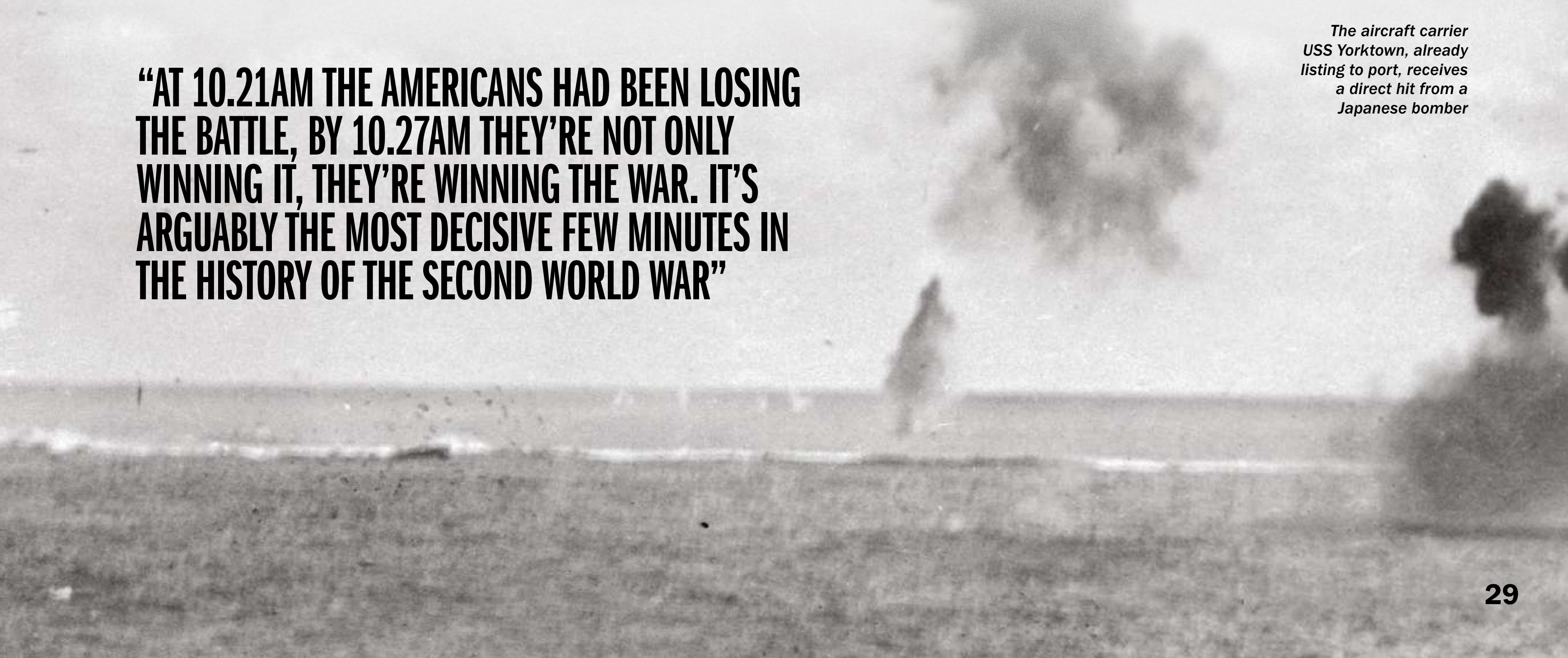
12:00pm

The first Val is blown out of the sky, but not before it manages to score a direct hit on the Yorktown. Another Val is also lost, but in all the Japanese manage a further two hits on the US carrier, setting it ablaze and bringing it to a halt. With the ship out of action, Admiral Fletcher transfers to the heavy cruiser USS Astoria and hands over his command of the battle to Rear Admiral Spruance on the USS Enterprise.

1.30pm

A second strike force made up of ten Kate torpedo bombers escorted by six Zero fighters takes off from the Hiryu to attack the US carriers. An hour later, its pilots also encounter the Yorktown. Six Wildcats engage the group, shooting down a single Kate. The rest of

> **"AT 10.21AM THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN LOSING THE BATTLE, BY 10.27AM THEY'RE NOT ONLY WINNING IT, THEY'RE WINNING THE WAR. IT'S ARGUABLY THE MOST DECISIVE FEW MINUTES IN THE HISTORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR"**

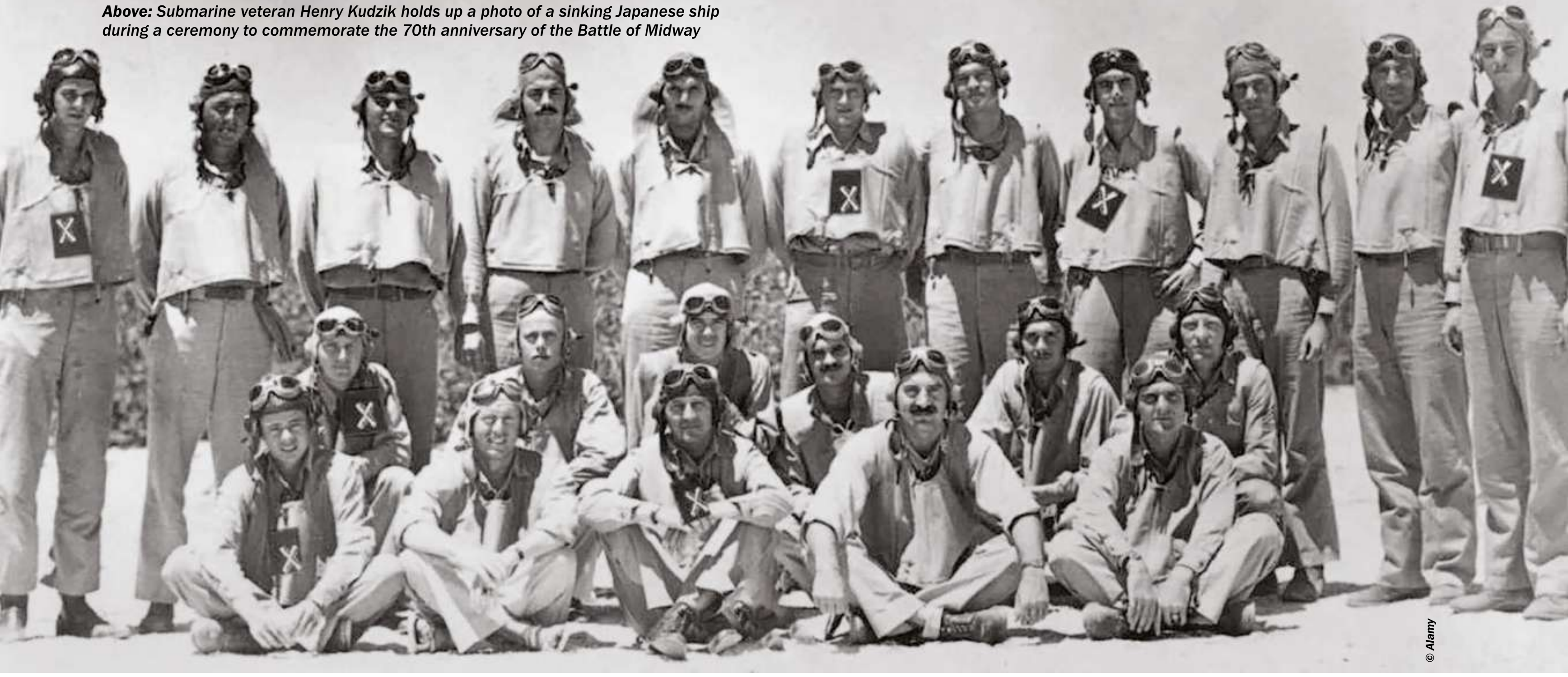


The aircraft carrier USS Yorktown, already listing to port, receives a direct hit from a Japanese bomber

© Getty

A Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo bomber pictured at the Thunder Over Michigan air show
© Alamy

***Above:** Submarine veteran Henry Kudzik holds up a photo of a sinking Japanese ship during a ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Midway*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***Above:** Pilots of a Marine Scout Bombing Squadron pictured on Midway. On this photograph an 'X' was placed over each man who was killed in the Battle of Midway*

the torpedo bombers, however, get through. Skimming over the water through a blizzard of anti-aircraft fire, they split into two groups to attack the stricken ship from both sides. The four planes approaching from starboard are all downed without scoring a single hit. The five attacking from port side, however, strike the carrier twice. A huge hole is punched into its hull that leaves it listing so badly its deck is almost touching the water.

3:00pm
The order is given to abandon ship to prevent further loss of life, although it will take until the morning of 7 June for Yorktown to eventually sink. With the Hiryu now only 71 miles (115km) out from the other two US carriers, Spruance orders all available dive bombers to attack it. Forty unescorted Dauntless planes are dispatched from Enterprise and Hornet, leaving the fighters behind to defend the carriers.

4.45pm
The US bombers sight the Hiryu as Nagumo's fleet retreats west. Moving west to attack out of the sun, the Americans hope to surprise the Japanese for a second time that day. "The fact that the Japanese didn't have radar at that stage of the war is really significant," explains Holland. "They've got all these incredibly technically advanced warships and aircraft carriers yet they're missing that vital piece of equipment and it costs them."

"MIDWAY REALLY WAS THE LAST THROW OF THE DICE FOR THE JAPANESE"

5.01pm
The Dauntlesses rain down bombs on the Hiryu and within five minutes have scored four direct hits. The explosions cause fires to rage through the hangars on the lower decks, again setting planes and munitions alight. The fires are so intense that the remaining Dauntlesses peel off and attack the Hiryu's escort ships instead. Later that night, just before midnight, a huge explosion rips through the carrier and at 3.15am on 5 June the order is given to abandon ship. Although there are further minor skirmishes over the next few days, the destruction of the Hiryu effectively brings the battle to a close.

Aftermath

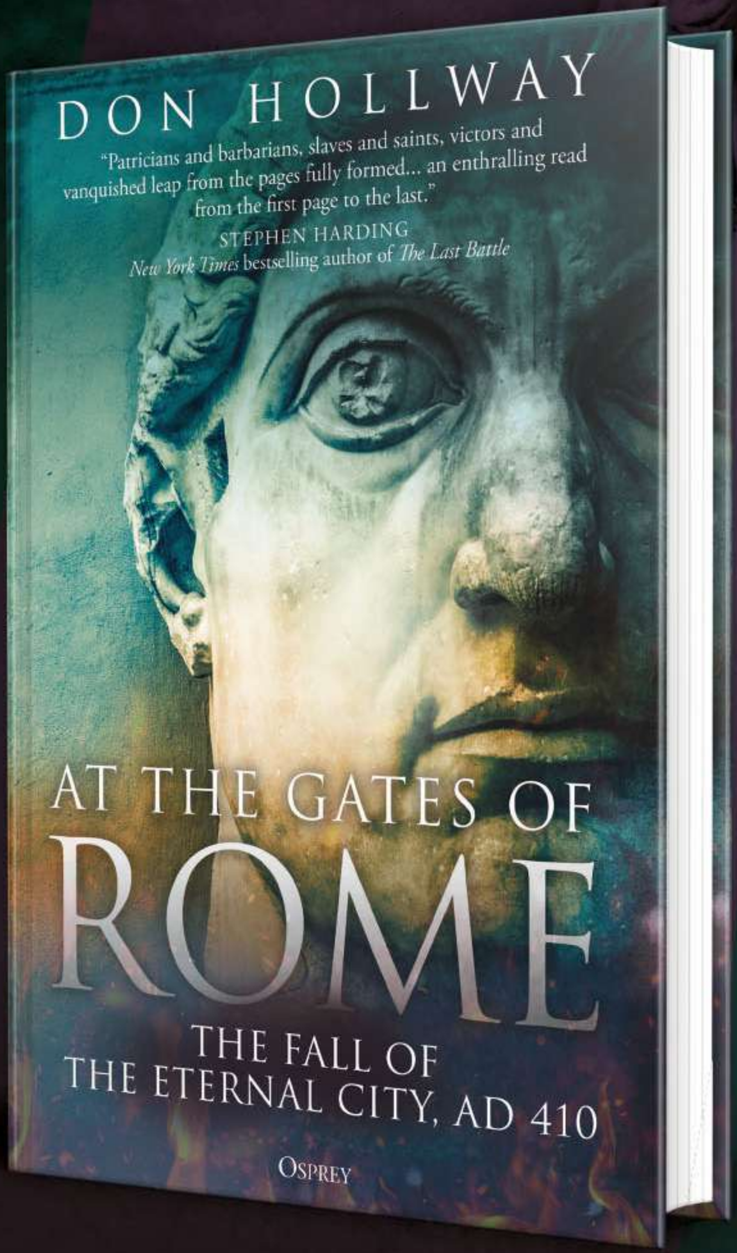
It wasn't just the loss of the carriers of the Kido Butai that was to prove so devastating for the Japanese. "What's also significant is the loss of around 200 of their most experienced pilots," says Holland. "These men had been flying for years. They had 500 to 1,000 hours in their logbooks and were the absolute cream. They were irreplaceable. Japan could and did build other carriers but it never had the resources or the time to train subsequent pilots as well."

The defeat at Midway put the Japanese on the back foot for the rest of the war as the US now went on the offensive. Victory after victory followed for the Americans as they fought their way across the Pacific. "It turned into this really brutal, attritional war with Japan desperately scrabbling about for resources," says Holland, "Midway really was the last throw of the dice for the Japanese and afterwards, as America threw its full industrial might into the conflict, there was just no way back for them. They still sank American carriers, cruisers and battleships, but it was never enough."

Although Japan had no hope of winning, it stubbornly refused to admit defeat. The war dragged on for the another three years with only atomic weapons bringin an end to its leaders' imperial ambitions.

"Patricians and barbarians, slaves and saints, victors and vanquished leap from the pages fully formed... an enthralling read from the first page to the last."

STEPHEN HARDING
New York Times bestselling author of *The Last Battle*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AT THE GATES OF
ROME
THE FALL OF
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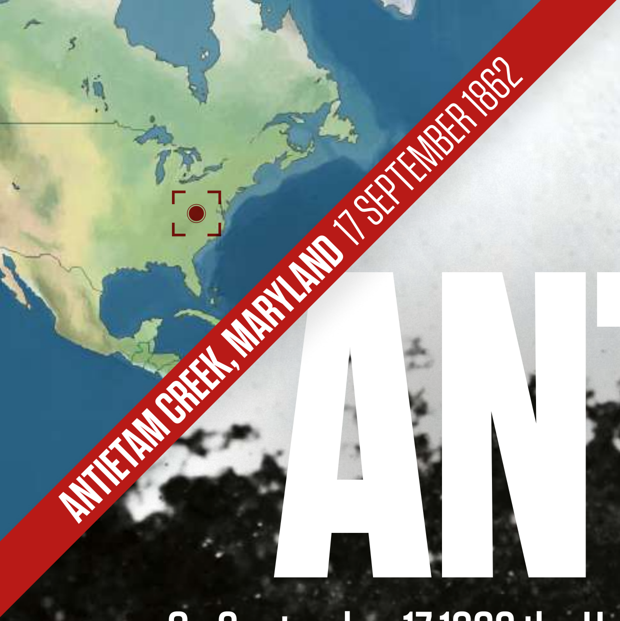
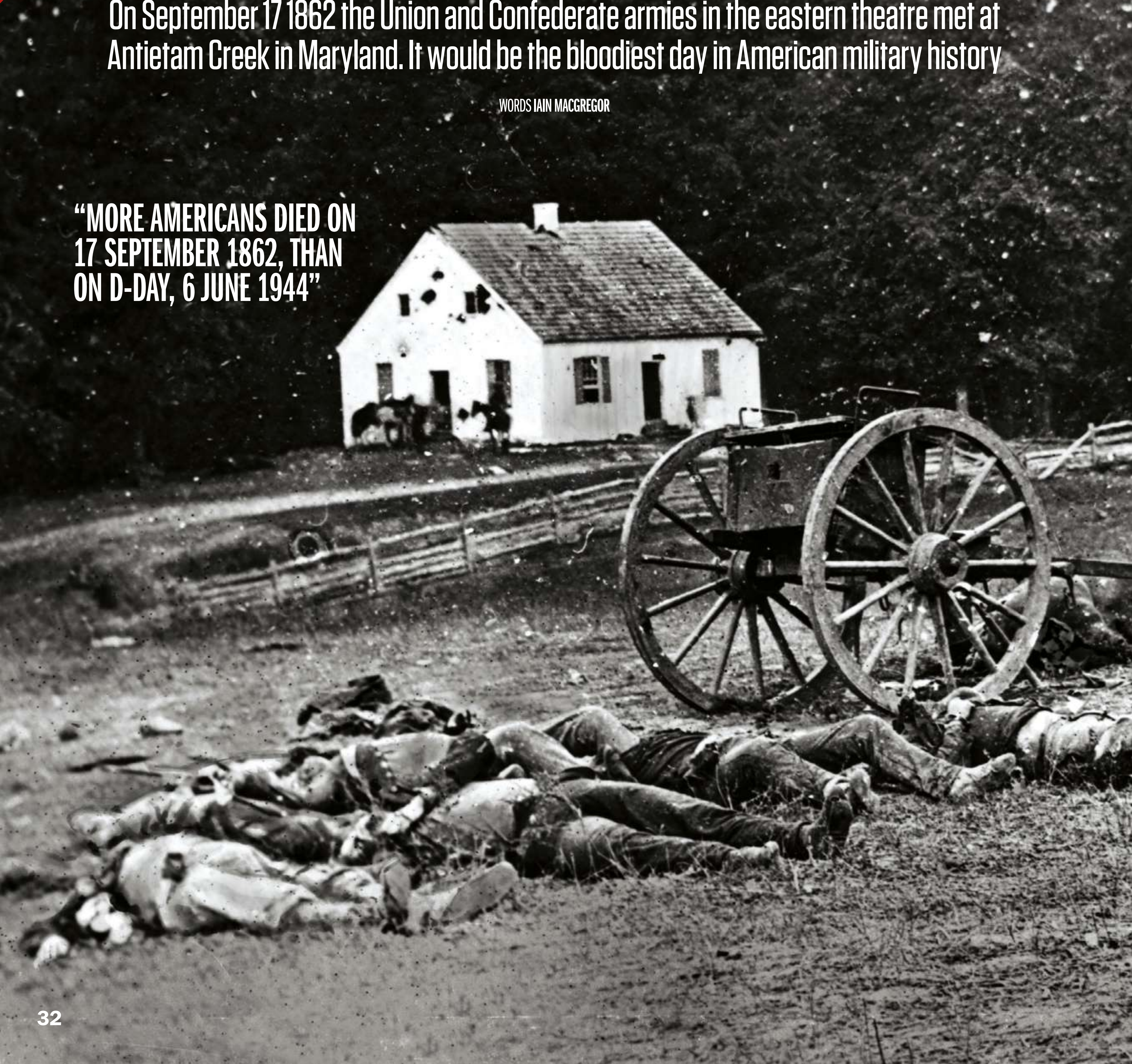


ANTIETAM CREEK, MARYLAND 17 SEPTEMBER 1862

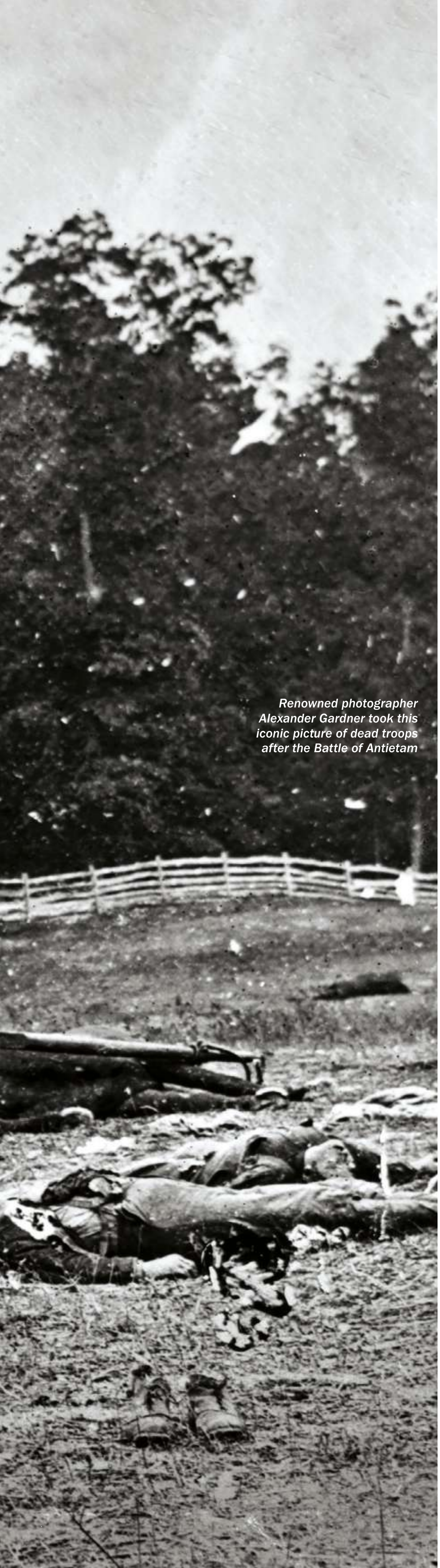
ANTIETAM

On September 17 1862 the Union and Confederate armies in the eastern theatre met at Antietam Creek in Maryland. It would be the bloodiest day in American military history

WORDS **IAIN MACGREGOR**



"MORE AMERICANS DIED ON 17 SEPTEMBER 1862, THAN ON D-DAY, 6 JUNE 1944"



Renowned photographer Alexander Gardner took this iconic picture of dead troops after the Battle of Antietam

The first year of the American Civil War (1861-65) had shown the people of both north and south that it would be a long, bloody conflict. A decades-long feud over states' rights to own slaves in the south, versus the determination in the north to abolish the evil trade, had culminated in the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in November 1860. Lincoln had won on a platform not to abolish slavery, but to reform it and prevent its spread into the new states being formed in the west of the continent.

To southerners, who had not voted for him, this was a step too far and they openly argued for secession – that is, to leave the Union and set up their own government. Eleven states would form what would become known as the Confederacy. By April 1861, with Lincoln now in office, both sides became belligerent and armed conflict became a distinct possibility, with Americans on both sides of the political divide rushing to join local militias, state units and armies.

On 12-13 April, Confederate militia artillery surrounded the federal arsenal based in Fort Sumter in the centre of Charleston Harbor, North Carolina – the first state that seceded from the Union. Rebel artillery reduced the federal fortification to rubble and the unharmed garrison was captured. After this, both sides rapidly expanded their armed forces from local militias into well-trained armies – the blue of the Union versus the grey of the new Confederate States of America (CAS). By now there had been several major battles across 1,600km of the continent's frontier, but by the autumn of 1862 all eyes looked towards the eastern theatre for a decisive encounter.

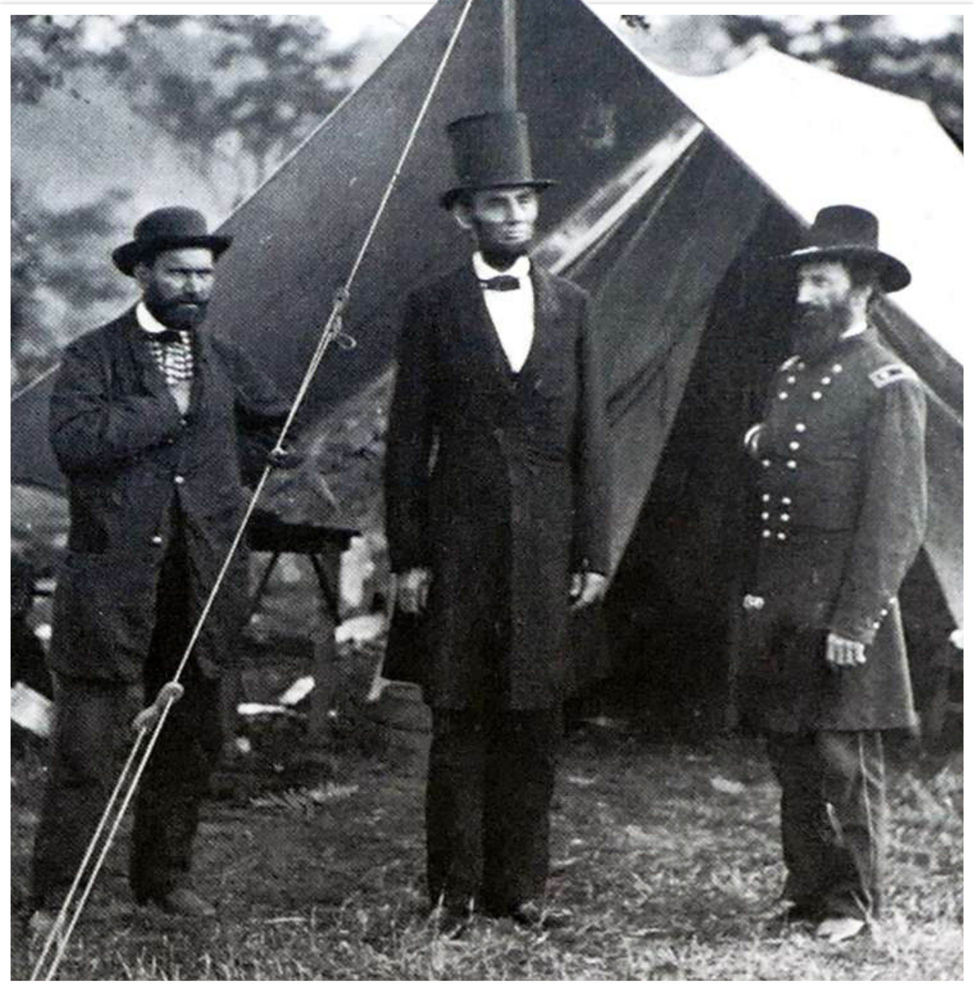
The Battle of Antietam would prove to be the bloodiest day, in terms of killed, wounded and missing, in American military history. To put this into perspective, more Americans died on 17 September 1862 than on D-Day, 6 June 1944.

Fought in the rolling farm hills of Maryland, the Union's Army of the Potomac claimed a bloody victory over what had been for the previous year an unbeatable Confederate army led by the genius that was Robert E Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

OPPOSING FORCES

UNION	VS	CONFEDERATE
LEADER George B McClellan		**LEADER** Robert E Lee
TROOPS 87,000		**TROOPS** 45,000
ARTILLERY 275		**ARTILLERY** 194

Left to right: Allan Pinkerton, President Abraham Lincoln and John Alexander McClernand in the vicinity of Antietam



Images © Getty

However, though Lee's army was beaten, the Union commander George B McClellan failed to destroy it as he spurned countless opportunities in the day-long battle and then sat idly by while the Confederates made their way back south to their bases in Virginia.

The single positive many in the north took was that finally they had shown Lee could be beaten. President Lincoln certainly used the aftermath to push his own agenda and on 1 January 1863 issued his Emancipation Proclamation: the eventual freeing of the slaves in the south. The people of the northern states now had a rallying point to fight the next two years to eventual victory.

March to Antietam

The Confederacy's first invasion of the north would begin with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia (approximately 55,000 men) moving north into Maryland, which at the time was a neutral state with no clear mandate to support either side. The Confederate leadership of Jefferson Davies was aware that a further southern victory over the Army of the Potomac might precipitate foreign intervention from Britain and France to force a negotiated peace or at the very least have European powers recognise the Confederacy's right to exist.

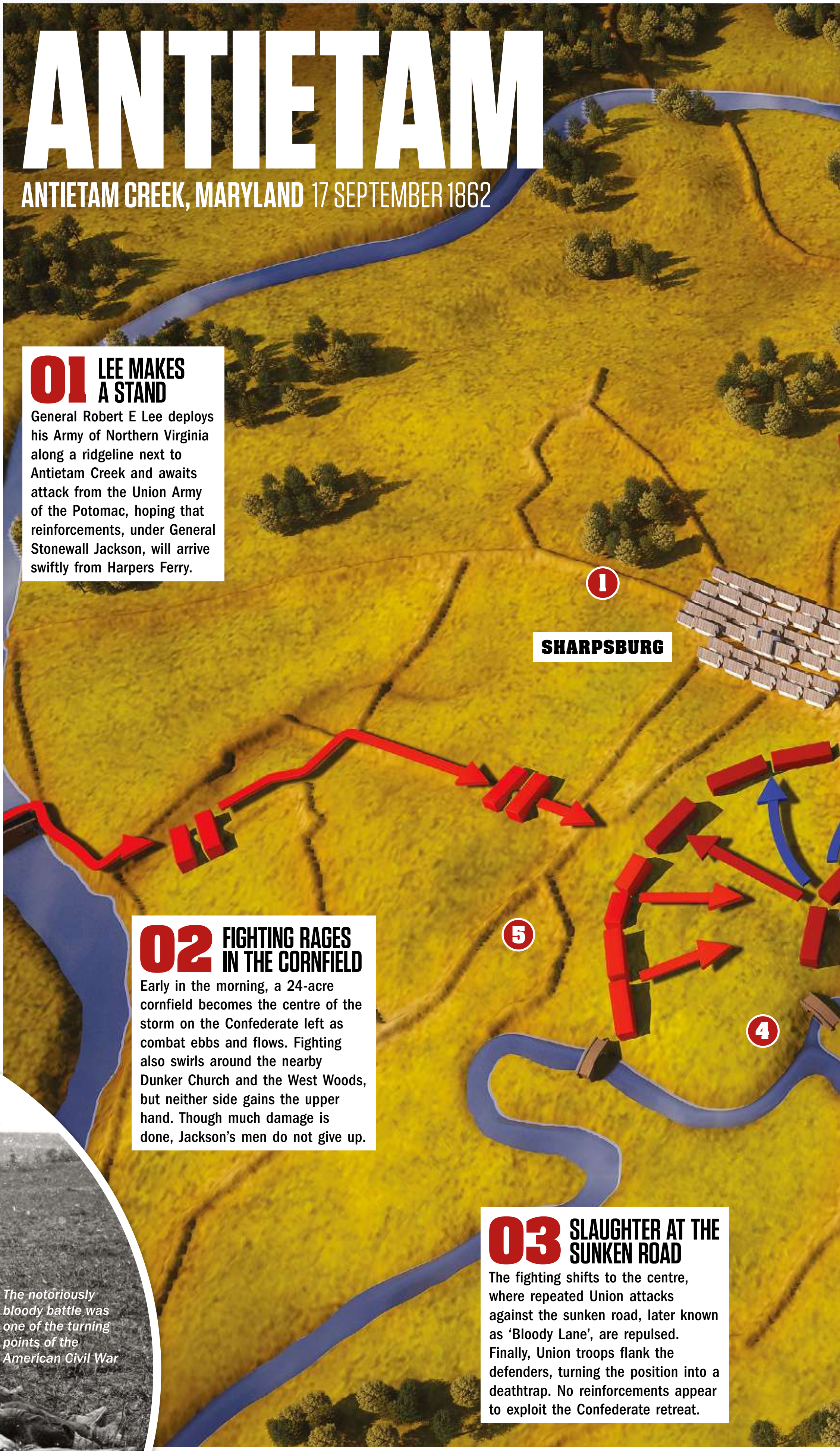
After the Army of the Potomac was driven back from the Confederate capital Richmond in Virginia that May, Major General George B McClellan was replaced. His former army was subsequently heavily defeated at the Second Battle of Bull Run that August.

An exasperated Lincoln now recalled their previous commander in the hope he could find a victory. McClellan was a superb administrator and loved his men – who returned the affection – but he crucially lacked the killer instinct as had been seen with his defeat at the hands of Lee that spring. He now commanded an army well over 85,000 strong, heavily armed and well supplied. His orders were to protect the capital Washington DC, and to find Lee's army and destroy it.

But as both sides tracked one another through the state of Maryland, McClellan was provided with the discovery by Union cavalry scouts of the Confederate's battle plan

ANTIETAM

ANTIETAM CREEK, MARYLAND 17 SEPTEMBER 1862



01 LEE MAKES A STAND

General Robert E Lee deploys his Army of Northern Virginia along a ridgeline next to Antietam Creek and awaits attack from the Union Army of the Potomac, hoping that reinforcements, under General Stonewall Jackson, will arrive swiftly from Harpers Ferry.

02 FIGHTING RAGES IN THE CORNFIELD

Early in the morning, a 24-acre cornfield becomes the centre of the storm on the Confederate left as combat ebbs and flows. Fighting also swirls around the nearby Dunker Church and the West Woods, but neither side gains the upper hand. Though much damage is done, Jackson's men do not give up.

03 SLAUGHTER AT THE SUNKEN ROAD

The fighting shifts to the centre, where repeated Union attacks against the sunken road, later known as 'Bloody Lane', are repulsed. Finally, Union troops flank the defenders, turning the position into a deathtrap. No reinforcements appear to exploit the Confederate retreat.

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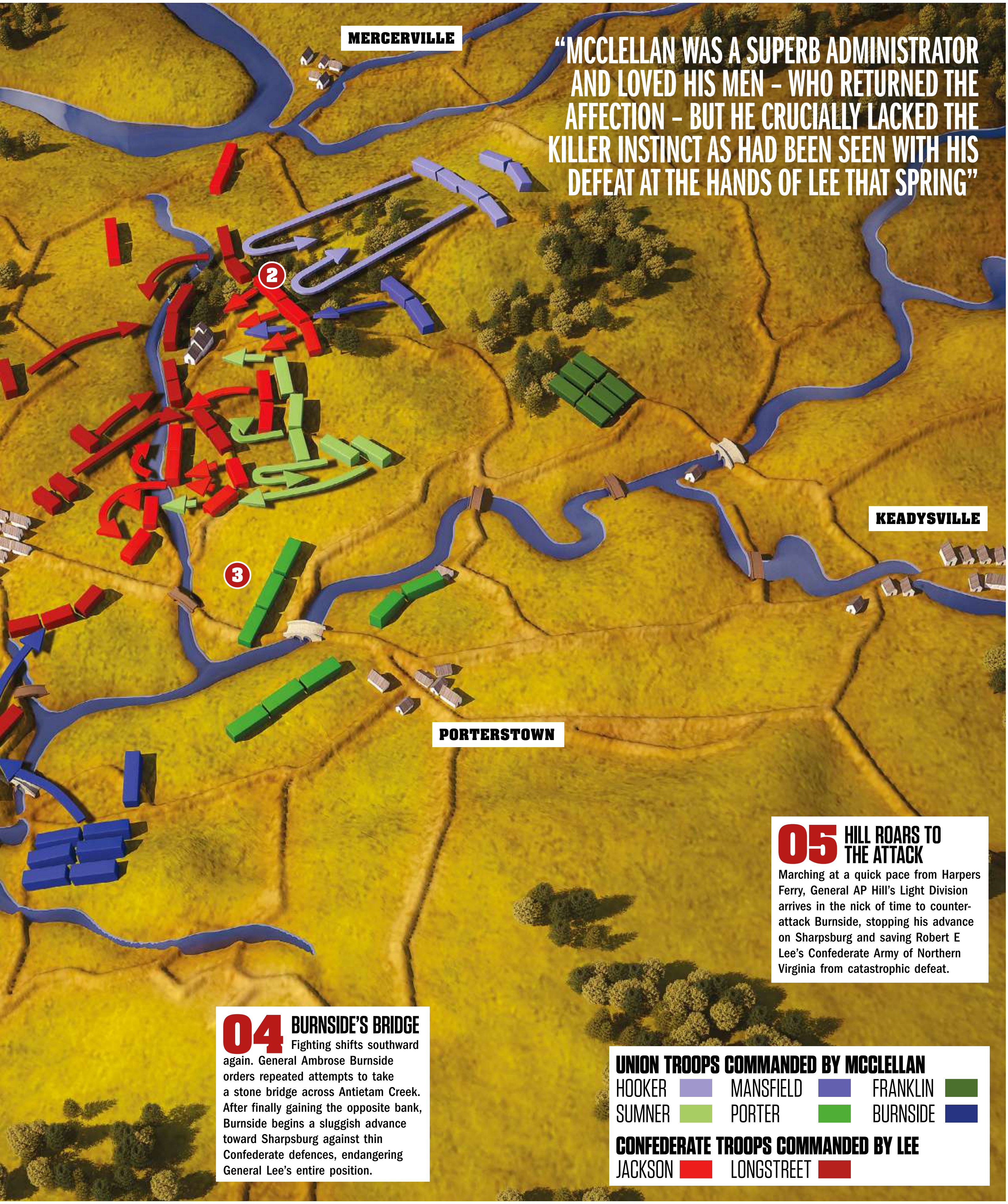
The notoriously bloody battle was one of the turning points of the American Civil War



> "MCCLELLAN WAS A SUPERB ADMINISTRATOR AND LOVED HIS MEN – WHO RETURNED THE AFFECTION – BUT HE CRUCIALLY LACKED THE KILLER INSTINCT AS HAD BEEN SEEN WITH HIS DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF LEE THAT SPRING"

04 BURNSIDE'S BRIDGE

Fighting shifts southward again. General Ambrose Burnside orders repeated attempts to take a stone bridge across Antietam Creek. After finally gaining the opposite bank, Burnside begins a sluggish advance toward Sharpsburg against thin Confederate defences, endangering General Lee's entire position.

05 HILL ROARS TO THE ATTACK

Marching at a quick pace from Harpers Ferry, General AP Hill's Light Division arrives in the nick of time to counter-attack Burnside, stopping his advance on Sharpsburg and saving Robert E Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia from catastrophic defeat.

UNION TROOPS COMMANDED BY MCCLELLAN

HOOKER 🟪 MANSFIELD 🟪 FRANKLIN 🟩
SUMNER 🟩 PORTER 🟩 BURNSIDE 🟦

CONFEDERATE TROOPS COMMANDED BY LEE

JACKSON 🟥 LONGSTREET 🟥

– called Special Order 191 – detailing their movements in the surrounding countryside. McClellan now knew Lee's army was split into three columns and could be picked off and destroyed piecemeal. Instead of acting on this news immediately, McClellan sat on the information for a crucial 18 hours. This grace period allowed Lee enough time to coalesce the greater portion of his forces, and set about building defensive works along Antietam Creek, in prepararion for the Union attack

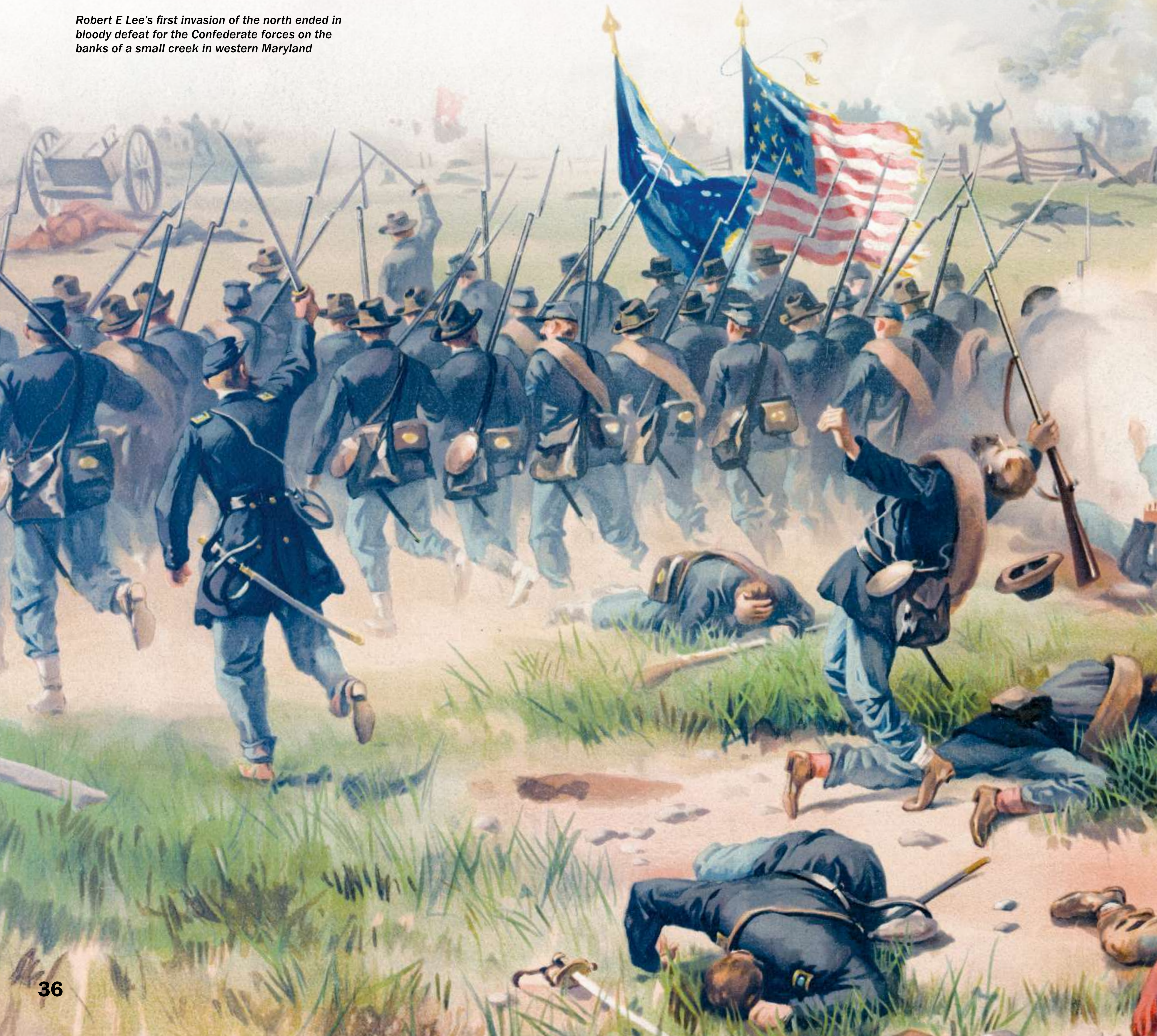
Among the green rolling hills, his men were protected by woods to their left, sunken roads in the middle of their lines and the Antietam Creek along their right flank, which could only be crossed by a bridge. But the weakened Army of Northern Virginia was precarious if attacked along a broad front simultaneously and, as we shall see, clever tactics and decisive leadership on one side saved the day.

"FOR NOW, LEE'S MEN SIMPLY HAD TO DEFEND FOR THEIR LIVES AGAINST VASTLY SUPERIOR UNION FORCES'"

Lee and McClellan clash

Antietam would be a battle in three phases that spread across the day as the Union commander McClellan looked to smash into Lee's lines and open up a gap that he would then exploit with his considerable reinforcements. Lee's army was still badly under strength, spread out as it was around miles of Maryland countryside. He was aware that he would be reinforced by at least one fresh division (Major General AP Hill's Light Division) that was force-marching its way to the battlefield. It would be hours before its arrival, however, and for now his men simply had to defend for their lives against vastly superior Union forces. Scarred by his previous encounter with the Army of Northern Virginia earlier in the year, however, McClellan was anxious. He fretted as he stared at Lee's defensive lines, openly voicing his fears as to the actual strength of the enemy in front of him. Such fears, and a lack of conviction to use his army to the best of its abilities, would now dictate how he performed as a commander on the day of the battle.

Lee had ensured his men were in sound defensive works right along the length of his 5km of line – anchored by woods to his left and the Antietam Creek to his right. His lines of supply and communication were shorter than



Robert E Lee's first invasion of the north ended in bloody defeat for the Confederate forces on the banks of a small creek in western Maryland

Secret Service Department headquarters, Army of the Potomac, Sharpsburg, Maryland, October 1862

A dead Confederate soldier lies near the hastily dug grave of 1st Lieutenant John A Clark of the 7th Michigan Infantry

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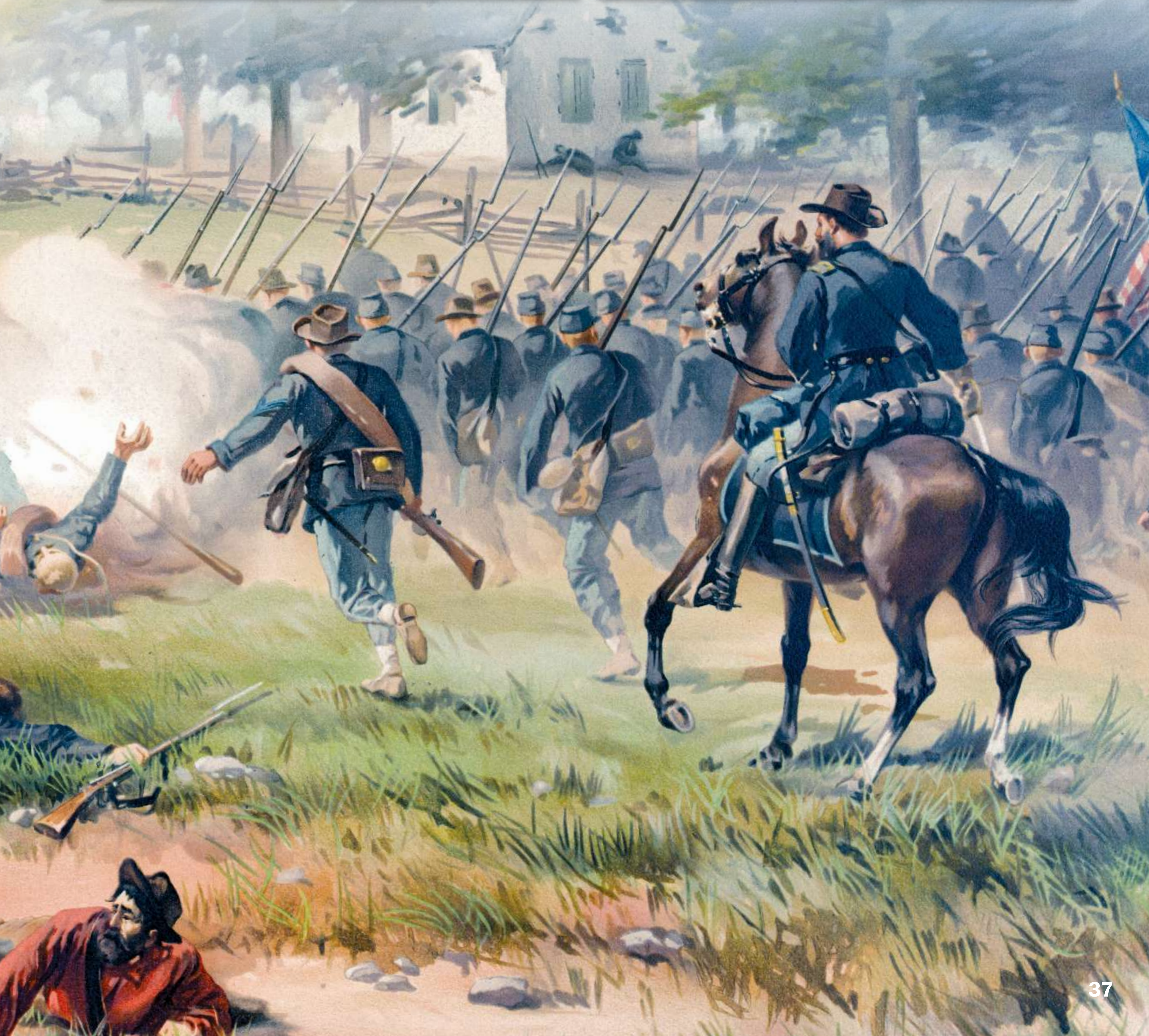

the Union's, who were spread further across in order to attack. This meant his commanders were close by to receive orders, he could rush reinforcements when needed from one side of the battle to the other, and crucially keep his forces supplied with ammunition against a tide of Union troops that was about to engulf them. His supply base was a few kilometres to his rear in the small town of Sharpesburg.

At dawn, on Lee's left flank, Major General Joseph 'Fighting Joe' Hooker's I Corps advanced up the Hagerstown Pike to dislodge the 7,000 men of Major General 'Stonewall' Jackson from a plateau on which sat a whitewashed church belonging to a local sect of pacifist German Baptists (the Dunkards). The fighting here would be fierce, as both sides fought for possession of cornfields that would change hands 15 times. Whole regiments entered the fray and disappeared in a firestorm of cannon and musketry. By 10am, two Union commanders had left the field wounded, and combined casualties stood at 13,000 men.

The battle now opened up on the centre of the Confederate line as Major General Edwin V Sumner's Union II Corps moved toward the sunken road occupied by Major General DH Hill's division of 2,500 men. Although heavily outnumbered, the Confederates had strong natural defensive works to beat back the brigade-strength waves of blue. As the carnage continued, both sides reinforced until all of Lee's reserves had been used and, significantly, many of his subordinate commanders overseeing the defence were out of action.

Union infantry finally exposed a weak point in the line and began enfilading fire into the startled Southerners, wreaking havoc. During three hours, across an area of several hundred yards, over 5,000 men would fall, leading to the position being named 'Bloody Lane'. The desperate situation was further exacerbated when a miscommunication saw what remained of the Confederate centre about-face with the intent to retreat back to Sharpsburg. Major General James Longstreet's quick actions with a counterattack and artillery fire drove the Federals back to their original starting points, but still McClellan didn't respond with reinforcements to exploit the position.

> “ACROSS AN AREA OF SEVERAL HUNDRED YARDS, OVER 5,000 MEN WOULD FALL, LEADING TO THE POSITION BEING NAMED ‘BLOODY LANE’”

By the afternoon, the focus of Union attacks now shifted to the southern end of the Confederate line. Here Lee's weakened right flank – he had taken various units away from this sector to reinforce along his northern lines – awaited to repulse Major General Ambrose Burnside's 12,000-strong X Corps, which advanced against 3,000 Confederates holding the ridges heading toward Sharpsburg. A small force of 400 Georgian infantry defended the vital stone-bridge crossing. Burnside sent in his forces one brigade at a time through this bottleneck, which were repulsed by the Georgians time and again, until finally the 51st Pennsylvania established a bridgehead and a push on to the rebel base of Sharpsburg was expected imminently.

In the nick of time, as Burnside took another two hours to bring up supplies of ammunition, the Confederate Light Division of Hill arrived after a gruelling 27km forced march. They slammed into the advancing Federals, who by now were a mere 200 yards from capturing Sharpsburg itself, driving them back toward the creek and to the bridge they had expended so much blood capturing. An unnerved Burnside, not realising he still outnumbered this new force, begged McClellan for reinforcements, but despite

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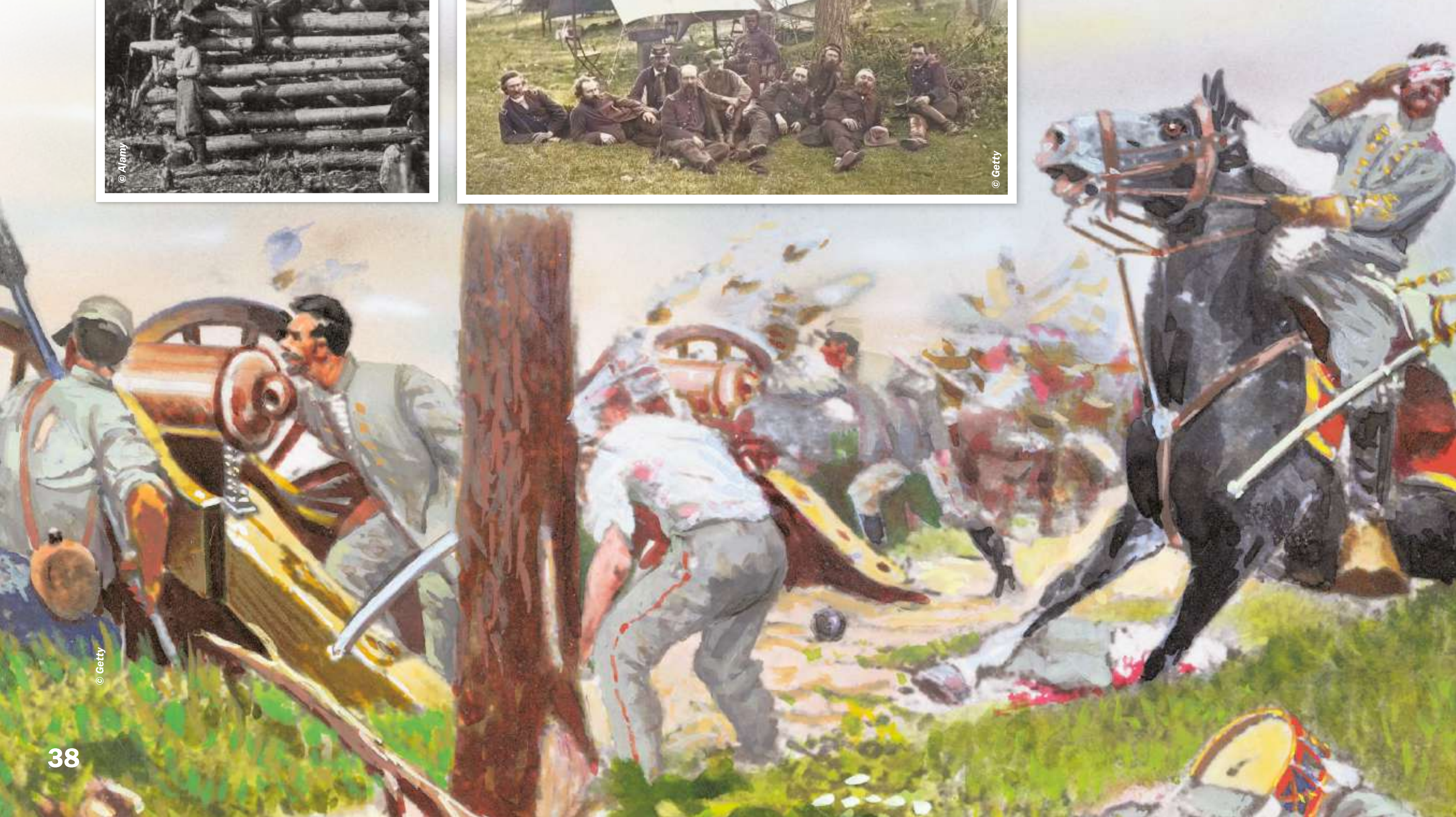
Far left: *Union soldiers erected signal towers at high points around the battlefield to report enemy movements*

Left: *A group of men pose for a photo at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, Antietam, October 1862*

Below: *A depiction of Thomas Jonathan 'Stonewall' Jackson directing troops during the Battle of Antietam*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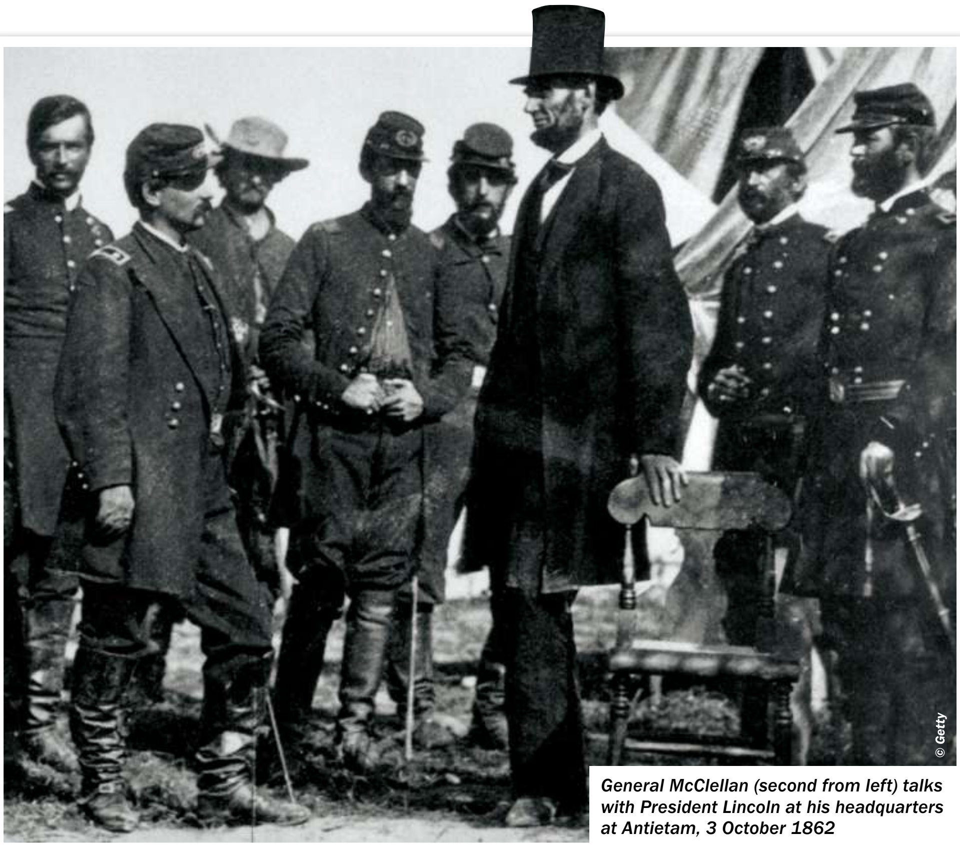
two corps in reserve, he refused. By 5:30pm, all was quiet along the line as both sides recovered from the carnage that they had inflicted upon each other.

Aftermath

The Union had suffered 12,410 casualties, with 2,108 killed. The Army of Northern Virginia's losses were 10,316 with 1,547 dead, while over 3,500 from both sides would soon die of their wounds. Lee's smaller force could not afford such losses, which would be the pattern as the war progressed. In terms of combatants and casualties, the Battle of Antietam was around the same size as the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 between Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington. There would be another 20 such Waterloos before the Civil War came to an end.

The next day, both sides recovered their dead and exchanged their wounded under a flag of truce. McClellan's corps commanders urged him to continue the assault on the Confederate positions as its battered army retreated toward the safety of Virginia, having suffered 31 percent casualties. Though a pyrrhic victory, Lincoln soon seized the moment to announce his Emancipation Proclamation for the South's 3.5 million slaves, which secured the goal of discouraging foreign intervention for a negotiated settlement.



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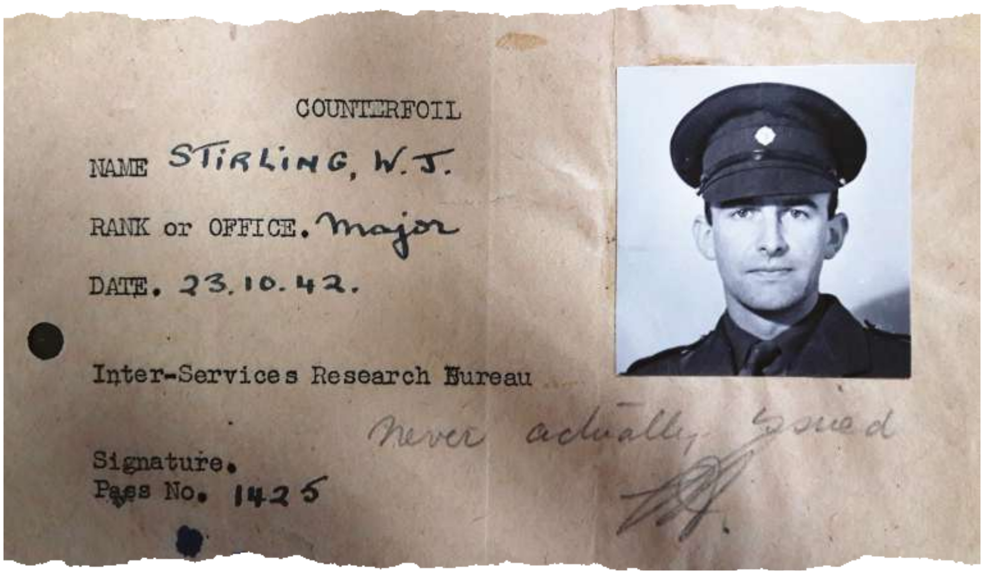
General McClellan (second from left) talks with President Lincoln at his headquarters at Antietam, 3 October 1862

THE SAS FRAUD?

Heralded as the founder of the Special Air Service, a new study alleges that David Stirling might not have been the military genius of legend. Historian Gavin Mortimer unravels the truth behind Britain's famed special forces officer

© Getty

An SAS jeep patrol is greeted by its commander David Stirling on its return from the desert, 18 January 1943



COUNTERFOIL

NAME STIRLING, W.J.

RANK or OFFICE. Major

DATE. 23.10.42.

Inter-Services Research Bureau

never actually issued

Signature.

Pass No. 1425

Images: Gavin Mortimer

***Above:** David Stirling, pictured at Ampleforth College in 1927, had a reputation as an indolent, lazy student*

***Left:** Bill Stirling, David's older brother, was the intellectual force behind the SAS. After the war the official SAS War Diary described the unassuming and modest soldier as "a man from the shadows"*

On 5 May 1958 *The Phantom Major* was published. Written by the American author and former war correspondent Virginia Cowles, the book was an authorised biography of David Stirling, founder of the SAS and, according to Cowles, "a well-established legend".

The book was timely. Britain's confidence was low, what with the ongoing break-up of the empire and humiliation at the Suez Canal in Egypt 18 months earlier. The nation needed a hero, a reminder of past glories. David Stirling fitted the bill.

The reviews of *The Phantom Major* were ecstatic. The *Daily Express* made the bold claim that Stirling "shortened the war for us", and the *Birmingham Post* hailed him a genius. Across the water in Northern Ireland, the *Belfast Telegraph* praised the breathless prose of Cowles in describing Stirling's "incredibly audacious sabotage". Nevertheless, the paper respectfully pointed out that many of the SAS exploits in North Africa in 1941 and 1942 had been inspired by "the late R. Blair Mayne".

The mention of that name would have pricked Stirling's conscience. Robert Blair Mayne, 'Paddy' to his comrades, had finished the war with a DSO and three bars, and a reputation as a brilliant guerrilla fighter. Agile, innovative and extraordinarily brave, the former international rugby star was everything Stirling wanted to be but was not. He spent the years immediately after the war bitter and resentful, but when Mayne was killed in a car crash in December 1955 Stirling spotted an opportunity. The story of how the SAS came to be formed would now be told, and Stirling, not Mayne, would be the dashing hero, the fearless guerrilla, the Phantom Major.

From the ranch to the regiment

David Stirling was born on 15 November 1915, not in Scotland as is commonly stated, but in London: just one of many popular misconceptions about him. He was the fourth child and third son of Brigadier-General Archibald Stirling and his wife Margaret.

As a toddler David suffered from a speech impediment, which made him insecure, irritable and impatient, character flaws that remained with him for life. He grew up overshadowed by his elder brothers, Bill and Peter. They all attended Ampleforth College and David was outshone by his siblings both academically and athletically.

Archibald Stirling died in February 1932 and Bill became Laird of Keir aged 21. Bill, who had his mother's social dexterity, was commissioned into the Scots Guards in the same year his father died, but he left the army in 1936 to concentrate on his business career. He also had the responsibility of running the vast estate at Keir with its many staff, not to mention keeping an eye on his five siblings, of whom David was proving the most troublesome.

David was gaining a reputation as a quitter, an indolent young man incapable of knuckling down. He had left Cambridge University after three terms and then hadn't lasted long with a firm of Edinburgh architects. Bill and his mother agreed he needed toughening up so in November 1938 David was despatched to the USA to work on a ranch in El Paso that was run by a family friend.

> **"THE DAILY EXPRESS MADE THE BOLD CLAIM THAT STIRLING 'SHORTENED THE WAR FOR US', AND THE BIRMINGHAM POST HAILED HIM A GENIUS"**

Stirling found ranching a hardship. He missed his creature comforts and was relieved when he heard that Britain and Germany were at war. He rushed home and enlisted in the Scots Guards, and for the first nine months of the war he conformed to type. A fellow Guards' officer, Willie Whitelaw, remembered him as irresponsible and lazy, regularly ignoring his duties "to go off to a party".

It was Bill Stirling who came to David's rescue. Recruited into Military Intelligence Research, the forerunner of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), Bill was selected for a six-man sabotage operation in Occupied Norway in April 1940. En route to their rendezvous with Norwegian partisans the submarine hit a surface mine and was forced to return to Scotland. Bill concluded that the entire mission had been poorly planned, laying bare the ignorance of high command on the subject of irregular warfare. He proposed to the War Office the establishment of a guerrilla school in the north-west of Scotland and on 3 June the Special Training Centre in Lochailort welcomed its first 25 pupils. Bill was the chief instructor and among the initial intake was David, sent to Scotland at Bill's instigation and to the relief of the Scots Guards, who had tired of his insouciant soldiering.

From Lochailort David was sent to No.8 Commando and in January 1941 they shipped out to the Middle East along with two other commando troops, Nos 7 and 11, known as 'Layforce', under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Laycock. Bill also sailed with the convoy having re-joined SOE at their request.

Once in Cairo, Bill soon left SOE to take up a position as an assistant to Lieutenant-General Arthur Smith, chief of the general staff (CGS) to General Archibald Wavell, commander-in-chief Middle East.

David, meanwhile, was becoming restless. By the early summer of 1941 Layforce was on the brink of disbandment, with too few opportunities for its type of warfare in Libya. Laycock had even suggested attacking targets by parachute, a novel concept for the British, but it was to no avail.

The idea of parachuting captured the imagination of one of David's fellow No.8 Commando officers, Jock Lewes, and he organised a training jump. David volunteered but hurt his back in his first drop. Lewes injured himself a day later. There didn't seem to be much future in parachuting.

Bill visited David in hospital. The youngest of the Stirling brothers, Hugh, had recently been killed in action in North Africa and Bill felt more protective than ever about his wayward sibling. David still harboured his ambition to raise a parachute unit but he needed Bill's expertise and encouragement to flesh out the idea.

Together the pair drafted a memo in July 1941 and Bill presented it to the CGS on behalf of his brother. The idea was accepted

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Above, left: *Robert Blair 'Paddy' Mayne was the de facto leader of the SAS thanks to his dominant character and many successful raids behind enemy lines*

Above: *Mayne (second from right) was killed in a car accident in 1955*

and David was authorised to raise a force of six officers and 60 men for a unit christened L Detachment, Special Air Service. The recruits came from Layforce, except one, Lieutenant Charles Bonington, a friend of Bill's from their time at Ampleforth College. Bill also invited three officers to join from No.11 (Scottish) Commando: Eoin McGonigal, Bill Fraser and Paddy Mayne.

Bill then stepped back. It was time for David to stand on his own two feet as he took his unit to their training base in Kabrit, 130km east of the Egyptian capital. However, it didn't take David long to realise that he was not cut out for his role as a special forces commander. Mayne meanwhile was emerging as the natural leader.

Early blunder in the desert

David began spending more and more time in Cairo, in the protective cocoon of the flat he shared with Bill and the third brother, Peter, a secretary in the British Embassy. Then, at the start of November 1941, Bill was summoned back to Britain. In a swoop David had a lost his mentor. In a letter to his mother, on 15 November, his 26th birthday, he described his sadness that Bill had gone and admitted that he hadn't felt so homesick since his school days.

Had Bill been in Cairo at the time of the inaugural SAS operation he might well have ordered its cancellation. The object of the mission, codenamed 'Squatter', was to parachute into enemy-occupied Libya and destroy aircraft on a string of Axis airfields at Gazala and Tmimi. Unfortunately the operation was predicted to coincide with a violent storm and the General Staff of Eighth Army advised David to abort the operation – but left the decision in his hands.

David, a gambler by nature and without Bill's wise counsel, went ahead and the operation ended in disaster. Of the 55 men who jumped, only 21 returned and not one enemy aircraft had been destroyed.

> **"DAVID, A GAMBLER BY NATURE AND WITHOUT BILL'S WISE COUNSEL, WENT AHEAD AND THE OPERATION ENDED IN DISASTER"**

Operation Squatter was the first and last SAS parachute operation in North Africa. In future they were transported to enemy targets in trucks driven by the Long Range Desert Group. Not that their mode of transport transformed David's fortunes. Time and again he failed. "The funny thing was that [of] all the operations, the big-success ones were Paddy's; and David, as much as he tried, couldn't get those planes," reflected Sergeant Bob Bennett, one of the first SAS recruits.

On 11 December 1941 Mayne led five men onto Tamet airfield, where they blew up 24 aircraft and killed or wounded around 30 aircrew as they relaxed in their mess. He returned to the airfield three weeks later and destroyed a further 27 planes. On the same two nights Stirling led raiding parties onto Sirte airfield but on the first occasion he stumbled into a sleeping Italian sentry and on the second attempt he strayed into a minefield.

Meanwhile, Bill Fraser enjoyed a good night's hunting at Agedabia airfield, destroying 37 aircraft, but Jock Lewes was killed on the last day of 1941 after a failed raid on Nofilia.

The death of Lewes left David more isolated than ever. Mayne was the de facto leader of the SAS, the dominant character, and David resented the fact. His spiteful solution was to appoint Mayne the unit's training officer. While the Irishman instructed a new batch of recruits in January 1942, David led a raiding party to the port of Bouerat, just over 320km behind the German front line, but it was not a success. In March David targeted another port, Benghazi, but once again they failed in their objective. Mayne, on the other hand, once more operational, destroyed 15 aircraft at Berca airfield. Between them Mayne and Fraser had destroyed more than 100 enemy aircraft but David had achieved nothing of note.

A special prisoner

David was captured by the Germans in January 1943, taken without a shot being fired after he had neglected to post any sentries as his jeep patrol rested in a Tunisian wadi. Sub-consciously he may have wanted to be caught. He was at

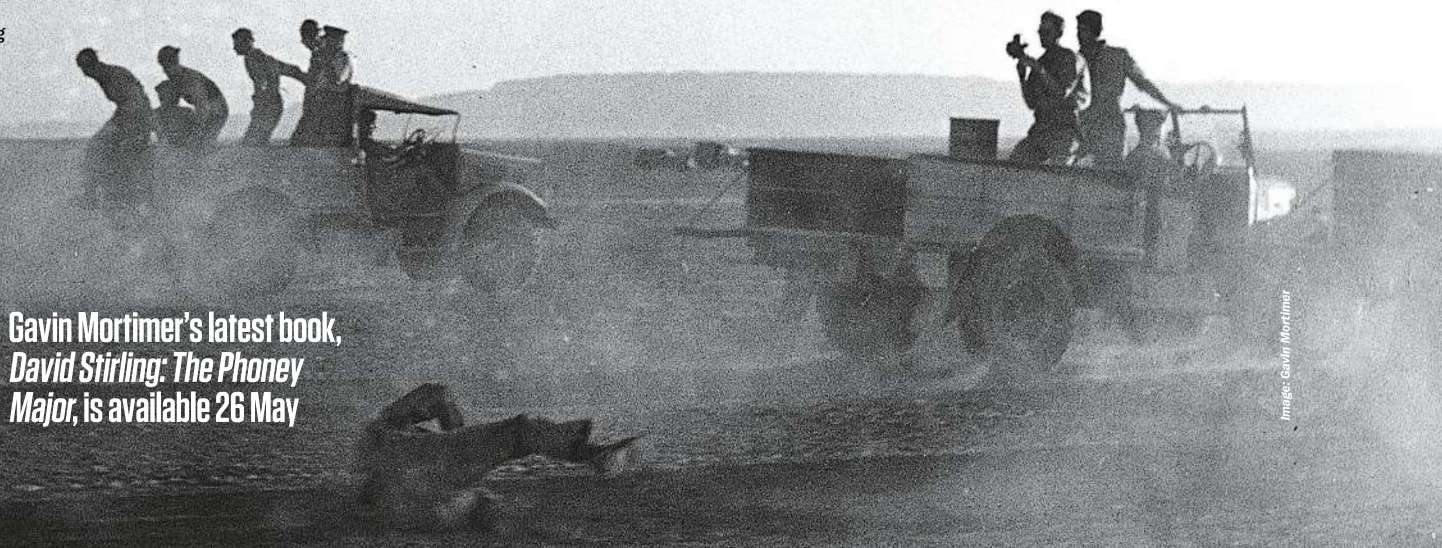
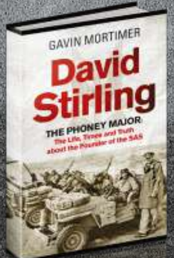

SAS parachute training – the regiment's only parachute operation in North Africa was a complete failure

Image: Gavin Mortimer



Gavin Mortimer's latest book, *David Stirling: The Phoney Major*, is available 26 May

Image: Gavin Mortimer

Image: Gavin Mortimer

***Above:** Some of the SAS Originals recruited by the Stirlings in 1941, including Johnny Cooper (far right) and Reg Seekings (crouching by the front wheel).*

***Above, right:** David Stirling (pictured c.1942) exaggerated his role in founding the SAS*

this stage emotionally and physically worn out, unable to cope with the pressure of command.

In September 1942 the SAS had been granted regimental status and David was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel but ordered to desist from going on operations. In October Mayne led his squadron into the desert to attack the Axis lines of communication before and after the El Alamein offensive.

David, on the other hand, was admitted to a Cairo hospital. He had festering desert sores, conjunctivitis and was generally run down. While recuperating he was ordered to return to London to discuss the future of the SAS post-North Africa. David ignored the order, which came from Louis Mountbatten, chief of combined operations. He wanted to keep his poor health hidden. Instead he headed west, into the desert, and, ultimately, into captivity.

For a brief while after David's capture the future of the SAS hung in the balance. That it wasn't disbanded was due to Bill Stirling, who flew to Egypt to reorganise the regiment. Like David, he was also a lieutenant-colonel, commanding the Small Scale Raiding Force, an amphibious unit that had raided enemy targets in France in the autumn of 1942. In May 1943 this force became the Second SAS Regiment and they carried out a series of effective raids that year in Sicily and Italy by parachute and by boat.

Mayne, meanwhile, led 1SAS into Sicily and Italy, receiving a bar to the DSO he had been awarded in North Africa. He got a second bar in France in 1944 and a third in 1945 for rescuing some of his men under enemy fire in Germany.

When peace came to Europe, Mayne was, to paraphrase Virginia Cowles, "a well-established legend". David Stirling, on the other hand, returned from captivity a nobody to most of the 2,500 men in the SAS Brigade.

Mayne certainly didn't want him around. "After the war they weren't speaking to each other because there were certain people feeding stories to one another, deliberately building up trouble," recalled one of the veteran "SAS Originals", Reg Seekings.

Concocting a legend

Like thousands of other ex-serviceman David was a lost soul in the immediate aftermath of the war. Fortunately, he always had Bill to turn to. His brother suggested he go to southern Africa, where he had many connections. In 1949 David established the Capricorn Africa Society, the aim of which was to promote multiracial development with money provided mainly by Bill. It wasn't a success, however, and by late 1954 David's profligacy had exasperated even Bill.

The tragic death of Mayne in 1955 was therefore fortuitous from David's point of view. After years of self-imposed exile he returned to Britain and contacted Cowles. He had tried once before, in 1951, to write a war memoir but his insipid manuscript had been rejected by a publisher. Cowles, however, had a gift for extravagant prose and together with David's shameless embellishments they created *The Phantom Major*.

There was the odd fabrication, such as the assertion that David had gone to the USA in 1938 to climb mountains as part of his training to scale Everest, and the claim that Mayne was in jail for knocking out a senior officer when David persuaded him to join the SAS.

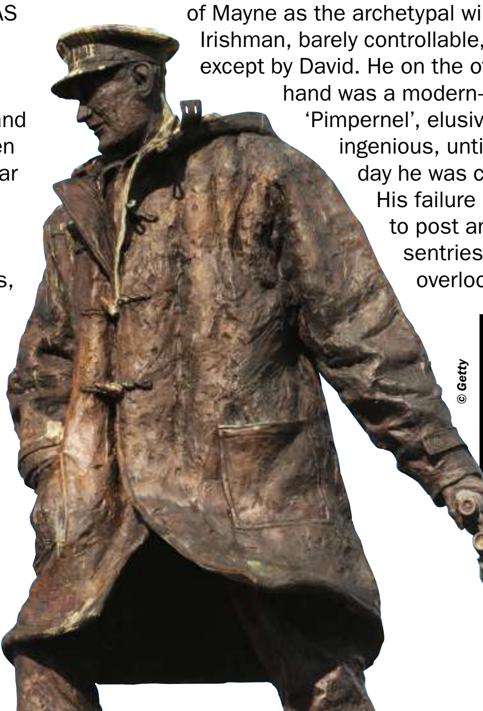
This was a theme throughout the book: that of Mayne as the archetypal wild Irishman, barely controllable, except by David. He on the other hand was a modern-day 'Pimpernel', elusive and ingenious, until the day he was caught. His failure to post any sentries was overlooked.

As for Bill, he was written out of the story, warranting just four references in the book's index, very much subordinate to his brother's supposed military genius. There was no mention of Bill having founded the Special Training Centre, nor his role in SOE or as commander of the Small Scale Raiding Force. And as for how the SAS came to be formed, David invented a story about barging his way into GHQ and, by a stroke of good fortune, coming face to face with General Ritchie, deputy chief of the general staff, who instantly recognised David's 'brilliance'.

Bill didn't raise any objections to having his contribution diminished. He was a discreet and secure man, who unlike his younger brother did not crave attention. Even the official SAS War Diary, compiled in 1946, referred to him as a man "from the shadows".

Post-war Bill had a wife and children, myriad business interests and an estate to run; David had nothing. BIll was happy for him to take all the credit for the SAS, though he was probably uncomfortable with David's depiction of Mayne, a man whom Bill admired. In truth Bill had been the intellectual force of the SAS and Mayne the physical force. David was the charismatic frontman, the face of the SAS, deploying his persuasive charm to great effect to impress journalists, politicians and generals.

Winston Churchill was among those taken in by David, although that was because his son, Randolph, was a friend who even served for a short while in the SAS in 1942. He was a terrible soldier but a terrific publicist for David and it was Randolph who in September 1942 coined the 'Phantom Major' moniker for a series of propaganda articles for the British press. The Germans, contrary to what was claimed in the newspapers, had never called him such a name. Why would they have? David had caused them few problems, unlike Paddy Mayne. He was the real Phantom Major. David was a phoney.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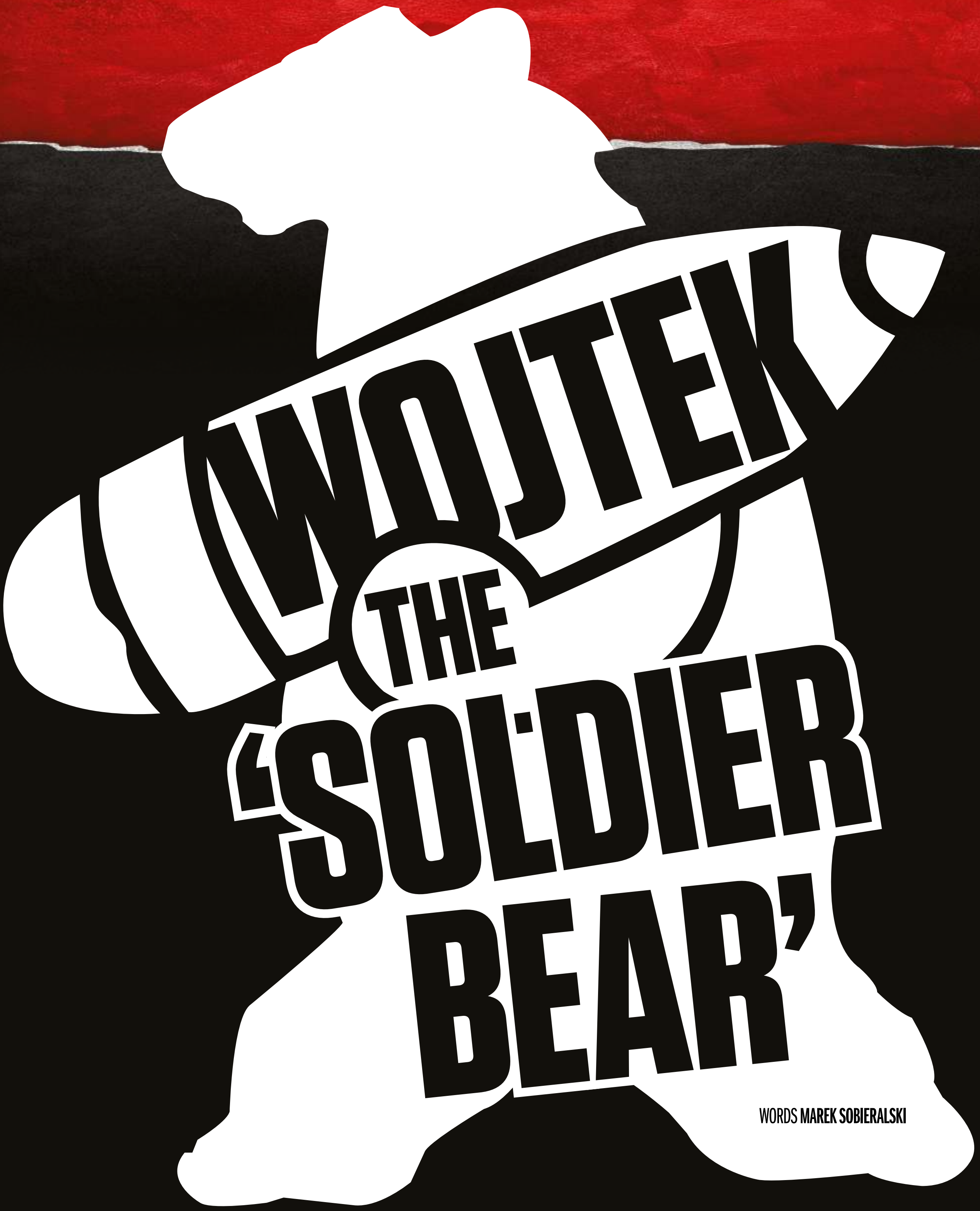
FURTHER READING

- ✪ Cowles, Virginia, ***The Phantom Major*** (London: Collins, 1958)
- ✪ Mortimer, Gavin, ***The Phoney Major*** (London: Constable, 2022)
- ✪ Mortimer, Gavin ***Stirling's Men: The Inside History of the SAS in World War II*** (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004)

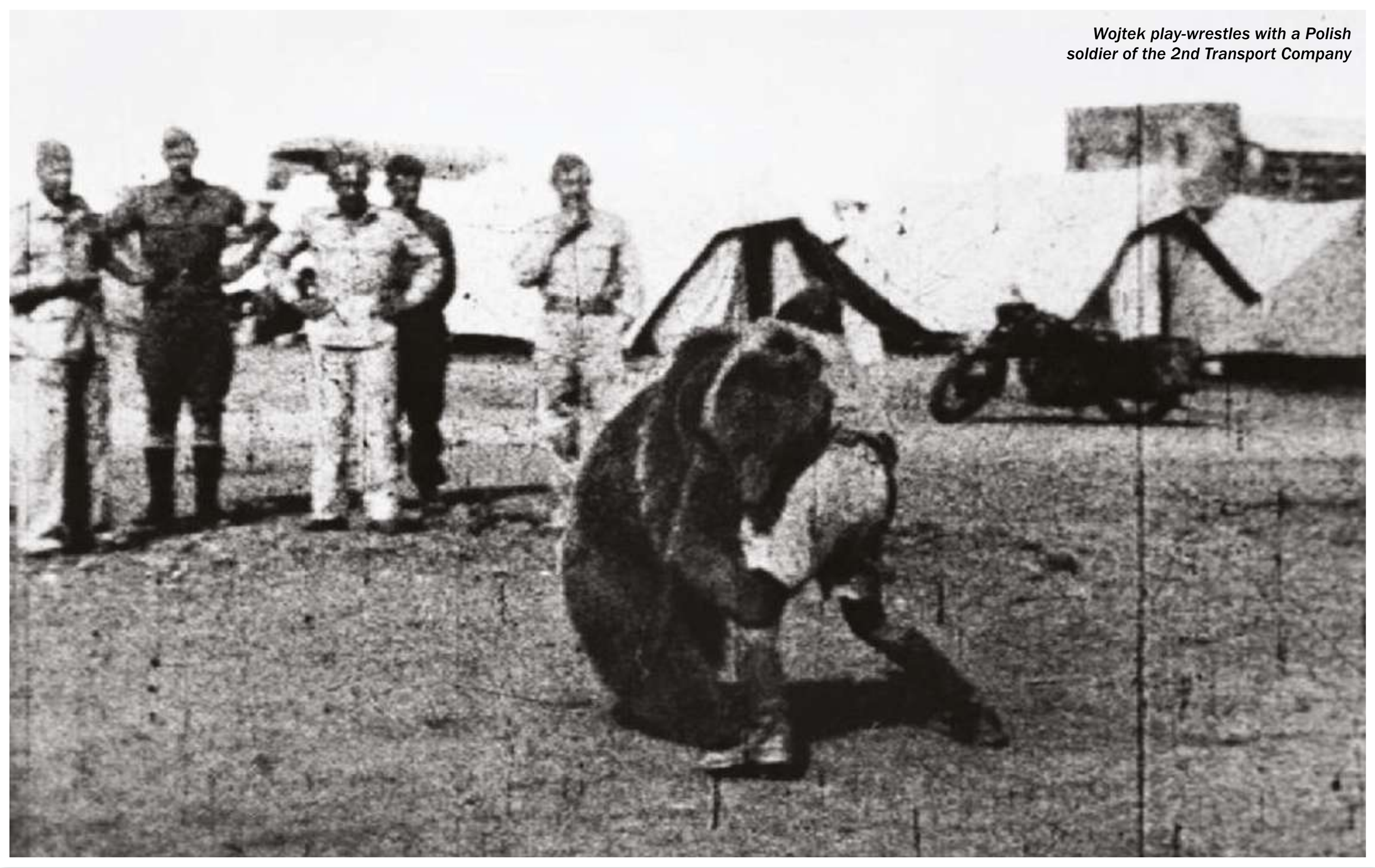
THE REAL HISTORY OF POLAND'S WWII MASCOT



WOJTEK THE 'SOLDIER BEAR'

WORDS **MAREK SOBIERALSKI**

This legendary brown bear accompanied Poland's army in exile across continents and onto the frontline



Wojtek play-wrestles with a Polish soldier of the 2nd Transport Company

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Animals have been trained and used for different functions in warfare for millennia – dogs, horses, dolphins, sea lions, monkeys, pigeons, elephants and many others have played roles in various militaries over the years. As well as those used directly in warfare or for transport, there are also military mascots kept as a symbol of a particular unit or for ceremonial purposes.

This is the story of Wojtek (pronounced VOY-tek), a Syrian brown bear who was adopted in Iran in 1942 by Polish soldiers who had been evacuated from the Soviet Union. He served with the Polish II Corps for five years, and saw action during the Italian Campaign in World War II, most notably during the Battle of Monte Cassino in 1944.

Wojtek’s remarkable story begins from the moment when the hungry and orphaned bear cub came into the possession of Polish soldiers in Iran. But how did those soldiers end up in the Middle East in the first place?

Over 230,000 Polish prisoners of war were taken into captivity following the Soviet Union’s surprise invasion of Poland on 17 September 1939. They were put into categories by the Soviet authorities, and those they feared the most were killed on the spot. Officers were held in special NKVD camps and were eventually killed in what was to become known as the Katyn massacre, where nearly 22,000 Polish military officers and intelligentsia were executed. Some privates were released after a relatively short time, with many then being sent to labour camps deep within the Soviet Union, where they joined the nearly one-and-a-half-million other deported Polish civilians who were seen as a threat to the Soviet State.

“WOJTEK SOON DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR BEER AND CIGARETTES, WHICH HE DIDN’T SMOKE, BUT ATE”

Life in these Soviet labour camps was hell on Earth and deportees died en masse from starvation, exposure or disease. They were beaten, raped and made to do backbreaking work in extreme conditions without proper equipment or clothing, while many others were murdered. Things only changed for some of these detainees after Germany attacked its erstwhile ally, a betrayal that led to the Sikorski-Mayski treaty being signed between Poland and the Soviet Union on 30 July 1941.

Under this agreement Soviet leader Joseph Stalin declared all previous pacts with Nazi Germany null and void, invalidated the September 1939 partition of Poland, and released tens of thousands of Polish prisoners of war held in Soviet camps. The Soviets had suddenly become dubious allies in the fight against Nazi Germany. On 12 August they granted an amnesty to Polish citizens, from whom an army would be formed under General Anders, who had recently been released from the Lubyanka prison in Moscow.

They eventually obtained an agreement to be evacuated from the Soviet Union through the Persian Corridor to British-controlled territories, and a huge exodus of over 110,000 people – including 36,000 women and children – began. Getting out of the Soviet Union was a priority, and anyone who had heard of the amnesty and was able to make the journey joined the columns of soldiers on their march out.

It was one such column that was carrying soldiers and refugees in an array of military trucks and vehicles that passed through the town of Hamadan in Iran on 8 April 1942. One of the trucks was being driven by a soldier called Józef Rutkowski, and when the column stopped for a break he noticed a small Iranian boy carrying a sack. He seemed keen to show its contents, and Józef tried to communicate with the boy, who clearly wanted to sell them what was inside – a small brown bear cub. They did not need to be able to speak the same language to see that the boy was extremely hungry, so Rutkowski and another soldier Jan Rybak gave him some local currency, tins of food, a bar of chocolate and a Swiss Army knife. The boy quickly disappeared, leaving the sack, and the soldiers were now left with a new ward to look after.

Their first task was trying to feed it. They found some evaporated milk and improvised a baby bottle by using an empty bottle of vodka and attaching a handkerchief to the end. Wojtek, as the bear was soon named, had joined the soldiers of the 2nd Transport Company, and was put in the care of Corporal Piotr Prendysz. The name Wojtek is the diminutive form of ‘Wojciech’ (Happy Warrior),

The bear mascot sits obediently as a soldier offers him a treat

an old Slavic name that is still common in Poland. The friendly bear was loved by everyone there, and soon became the company's mascot. The soldiers wrestled and played with him, fed him, and treated the bear as one of their own. Wojtek soon developed a taste for beer and cigarettes, which he didn't smoke, but ate.

Wojtek had another bear – Michał – to keep him company for a short time, but things didn't work out as Michał was quite aggressive and they got into a fight. As he was clearly a danger to Wojtek and the other soldiers, they decided to leave Michał at the zoo in Tel Aviv. The director there was excited to finally have a bear in the zoo's collection, and gave the Poles a small monkey in return. The monkey was named Kasia, and was expected to be a companion for Wojtek. But Kasia would constantly annoy Wojtek by riding him like a pony, or pulling on his ears or tail. Luckily for Kasia, despite his size, claws and teeth, Wojtek used to run away instead of ripping her to shreds. The relationship was short-lived however, as Kasia disappeared from their camp at some point, and Wojtek was without a companion once again.

He did of course spend lots of time with the soldiers; they played, wrestled and swam together when they could get away from their formal duties. The men decided that it would be a good idea for Wojtek to also have a non-human companion and friend, as the soldiers did not always have the time to give him the attention he needed. Wojtek did have the company of the dogs of British officers from time to time, but those meetings were infrequent and the dogs had to follow their masters. Rutkowski noticed that the bear was friendly with a little dog called Dodo that was seen near the camp accompanying its owner, then he turned up at the camp one day carrying the little Dodo. Wojtek was immediately overjoyed with his new companion. It seems the feeling was reciprocated, as they played, swam ate and travelled together.

On one occasion in the camp Wojtek came upon some women's underwear that was hanging out to dry, and went up closer to investigate. He thought it would be a good idea to take it, and there were comical scenes as he ran around the camp with some of the underwear on his head, while being chased by the women to whom it belonged. Wojtek was saved and the underwear retrieved by his carers, who made the most of this turn of events and invited the women to a small party by way of an apology.

Wojtek often travelled in military trucks, and used to sit happily in the cab until he grew too large and couldn't fit any longer. Instead, he had to climb in the back. One day, he climbed into a truck that was due to go to a nearby children's hospital. The hospital was full of children who had also been evacuated from the Soviet Union and had survived the trauma of deportation, the work camps and everything that brought with it. They were now slowly recovering from various illnesses, exhaustion, the effects of starvation and often the anguish of seeing their parents die. Many were apathetic, traumatised and depressed.

The driver decided to surprise the children and show them the bear. Wojtek caused great excitement; he was immediately loved by the children, who cuddled and played with him. After that Wojtek would regularly visit the children at the hospital, and it was noticed that he had a hugely positive effect

> **"WOJTEK LIKED TO TRAVEL IN MILITARY TRUCKS, AND USED TO SIT HAPPILY IN THE CAB"**

on them. The doctors and nurses at the hospital regularly commented on the amazing therapeutic effects of Wojtek in the course of treating their young patients.

On another occasion Wojtek caught a spy in the camp's shower block. The bear loved to take showers and he had soon learned how to use these by himself. A spy had sneaked into the camp and entered the shower block while looking for ammunition stores, and did not expect to see a big bear wander in. The spy had the fright of his life, and his screams quickly alerted the soldiers. When the Poles threatened him with another meeting with Wojtek, he quickly admitted who he was working for and his intentions. Wojtek was rewarded with candied fruits, beer and a very long shower.

In February 1944 it was time for the Polish II Corps – which had by this time grown to over 100,000 soldiers – to join the Allied Italian Campaign. The liberation of Italy had started with the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, followed by the invasion of the Italian mainland in September. The Poles were tasked with fighting alongside the British Eighth Army and the US Fifth Army. They and their equipment now needed to board a ship from Egypt to Italy. It had been assumed that they would leave Wojtek in the care of a zoo there, as they had previously done with Michał in Tel Aviv, but the thought of leaving the bear in Alexandria wasn't an option for the Poles. Major Antoni Chełkowski came up with the idea to report a new recruit to the enlistment commission. This was Private Wojtek Mis (Bear), and he was soon kitted out in a uniform, helmet, and haversack. And just like any other soldier, he received a military ID card, rations and wages.

The corps was initially involved in defensive operations on the Sangro Line, but things were about to get much more intense. The Battle of Monte Cassino had been raging since January 1944, and was proving to be a costly series of unsuccessful assaults against the well-

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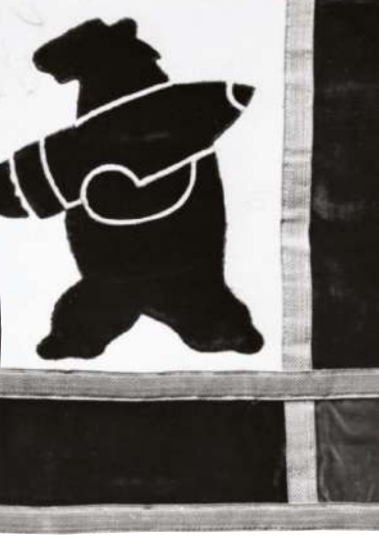

Top: Polish soldiers carry the body of a fallen comrade during the Battle of Monte Cassino

Above: The 22nd Transport Company's official emblem shows Wojtek carrying an artillery shell

Left: A memorial statue to the bear stands in the town of Duns, Scotland. It is one of several honouring Wojtek

LEFT TURN!
W WO ZWROT!

Many Polish women joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force after fleeing to Britain during WWII

positioned historic hilltop abbey after which the battle was named. Previous assaults by Indian, American, British and New Zealand forces had not been able to take the abbey, which was being vigorously defended by battle-hardened, elite German paratroopers. Now it was the turn of the Poles.

Wojtek's now-renamed 22nd Transport Company was supporting Polish artillery units by keeping them supplied with ammunition and other essential supplies. After the unit had travelled with their urgent cargo to more forward positions up the side of the mountain, all while avoiding snipers and mines, the troops needed to unload their equipment and transport it up to where their artillery pieces were embedded.

Up until now Wojtek's life with the 22nd Transport Company had been relatively peaceful and comfortable, not yet having been involved in any major action. Here at Monte Cassino he experienced war at close quarters, and at first he was understandably frightened. But after a short time the bear started getting used to the noise and commotion. Wojtek sat quietly and watched intensely as his friends and comrades carried heavy ammunition crates and shells, until suddenly he stood up and walked up to a nearby truck.

What happened next is variously reported, and turned Wojtek from a loveable army mascot into a wartime legend. According to Aileen Orr's book "Wojtek the Bear: Polish War Hero", the bear carefully picked up a full 100lb (45kg) crate of 25lb artillery shells (which ordinarily took at least two men to carry), put it down on the ground, opened it and carefully picked up an artillery shell. He then carried the shell to the artillery piece and carefully put it down next to the other shells there. Other accounts claim Wojtek carried empty ammunition crates back and forth. The press seized upon the story and the image of the bear carrying an artillery shell soon became an icon of Poland's military.

> **"IN RECOGNITION OF HIS EFFORTS DURING THE BATTLE WOJTEK WAS PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF CORPORAL AND, IN VIEW OF HIS POPULARITY, A DEPICTION OF A BEAR CARRYING AN ARTILLERY SHELL WAS ADOPTED AS THE OFFICIAL EMBLEM OF THE 22ND TRANSPORT COMPANY"**

Meanwhile, in the mountains above Cassino, Polish attacks and German counter-attacks brought heavy losses to both sides. Then on 17 May, General Anders led a second attack on Monte Cassino while under constant artillery and mortar fire from the strongly fortified German positions, where the fighting was fierce and at times hand-to-hand.

Suddenly the Germans decided to withdraw from the Cassino heights to new defensive positions on the Hitler Line. Meanwhile, the battered and shattered Polish survivors gathered their strength to climb the final few hundred metres to the summit, and raised a Polish flag over its ruins.

In recognition of his efforts during the battle, Wojtek was promoted to the rank of corporal and, in view of his popularity, a depiction of a bear carrying an artillery shell was adopted as the official emblem of the 22nd Transport Company. It was not just the Poles who witnessed Wojtek doing this: in an interview for a documentary on Wojtek, a British veteran recounted how he was taken aback when he suddenly saw a full-grown bear calmly hauling mortar shells past him during the bloody Battle of Monte Cassino.

When the Italian Campaign finally ended in May 1945, Corporal Wojtek finished his active wartime service, after the capture of the

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Top: Wojtek, pictured here in the 1950s, enjoyed his well-earned retirement at Edinburgh Zoo

Above: Former Polish soldier Wojciech Narebski, 93, pats a statue of Wojtek in Krakow, 2018

Above, left: Wojtek is pictured being fed by a Polish soldier in Iran

historic city of Bologna in northern Italy. The corps had fought with distinction and had been involved in many other actions along the way, including the capture of Piedmont, the Battle of Ancona, the Lombardy Campaign, Operation Grapeshot and the battle for the Gaiana River. Its final operation was the defeat of German armies south of the River Po between 21 April and 2 May. During the course of the campaign Wojtek’s company had delivered over 17,000 tonnes of ammunition, 1,200 tonnes of fuel and 1,100 tonnes of food to troops fighting on the front line.

In September 1946 the Polish II Corps was packed onto ships and transported to Berwickshire in Scotland, where the soldiers were to be gradually demobilised and sent on to civilian life. They were stationed at Winfield Airfield on Sunwick Farm, in the Scottish Borders. It soon became clear that the Polish soldiers who had fought alongside the Western Allies would not be able to return home straightaway. Poland was now under Soviet occupation and the communist government was not keen to see the return of many of the soldiers that Stalin had previously asked to leave. There were exceptions, however, and the new Soviet-controlled government did try to take action to bring back some of its compatriots in exile. Agitation took the form of political indoctrination aimed at dividing Polish communities that had formed in the West. The political situation in Poland, the shifting of the borders and the associated loss of homes caused much suspicion as well as despair among the Polish soldiers and their families, and many refused to return to their home country. The Polish authorities tried to ‘repatriate’ Wojtek’ but the veterans and other organisations prevented this, as they didn’t want him to become a mascot for the new puppet government.

With food rationing still in place in post-war Britain, it was a blessing that Wojtek was not a fussy eater. The local residents brought him titbits, for which Wojtek was always grateful. He was sometimes taken to a local pub by the soldiers – where he caused quite a stir – or to the cinema or theatre, where he was not always such a welcome distraction. With demobilisation in full swing, they needed to decide what to do with Wojtek. Releasing him into the wild was not an option, as he had no experience of surviving on his own, so in November 1947 Wojtek’s new and final home became a bear enclosure in Edinburgh Zoo. The soldiers wept when Wojtek left the camp for the final time, and were promised that the bear would receive the best possible treatment. After Wojtek’s handler walked him into his zoo enclosure for the first time, he said a tearful farewell, hugged him and then left him. Wojtek just sat there and waited for his friend to return.

Wojtek was always delighted when he received a visit from one of his former comrades, who would turn up with a beer, cigarettes and other treats. They would hop over the enclosure railings in order to get up close to the 1.8 metre, 500kg bear, which shocked and alarmed the other visitors and staff at the zoo. There was no need to worry, however, as Wojtek was thrilled to see his brothers in arms and would greet them warmly. He was a firm favourite with visitors, was sometimes visited by journalists, and was an occasional guest on the BBC’s children’s programme *Blue Peter*.

Wojtek, the soldier bear who went to war, spent the final 16 years of his life at Edinburgh Zoo – he died in December 1963, aged 22. There are many memorials to him in Poland and the UK, and one of particular note is a bronze statue of Wojtek by Alan Beattie Herriot. It stands in Edinburgh’s West Princes Street Gardens and represents Wojtek and a fellow Polish soldier walking together. In addition, a relief recounts Wojtek’s journey from Iran to Scotland with the Polish Army.

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Heroes of the Victoria Cross

CHRISTOPHER CHARLES TEESDALE

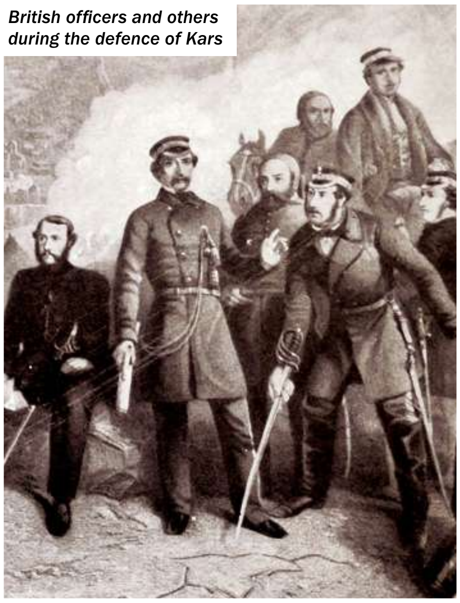
The first South African-born recipient of the Victoria Cross saved enemy lives at the 1855 Siege of Kars, the last major operation of the Crimean War

WORDS **MARK SIMNER**

Christopher Charles Teesdale entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, London, in 1848 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in 1851. The following year Teesdale went to Corfu, where he was promoted to first lieutenant in 1853. In 1854 he was appointed aide-de-camp to Colonel William Fenwick Williams, who at the time was the British commissioner with the Turkish army in Asia Minor during the Crimean War.

The same year, Teesdale accompanied Williams to Erzurum, from where they travelled to Kars, reaching the city on 24 September. Williams later returned to Erzurum, leaving Teesdale with the unenviable task of organising and establishing discipline among the poorly trained Turkish garrison. He worked ceaselessly to ensure the welfare of his men, and with his task largely complete by March the following year Teesdale rejoined Williams at Erzurum. He was made a major in the Turkish army and received a letter from the Foreign Office in London commending his strenuous efforts at Kars, which it was believed helped avoid a repetition of the previous year's famine that had ravaged the garrison.

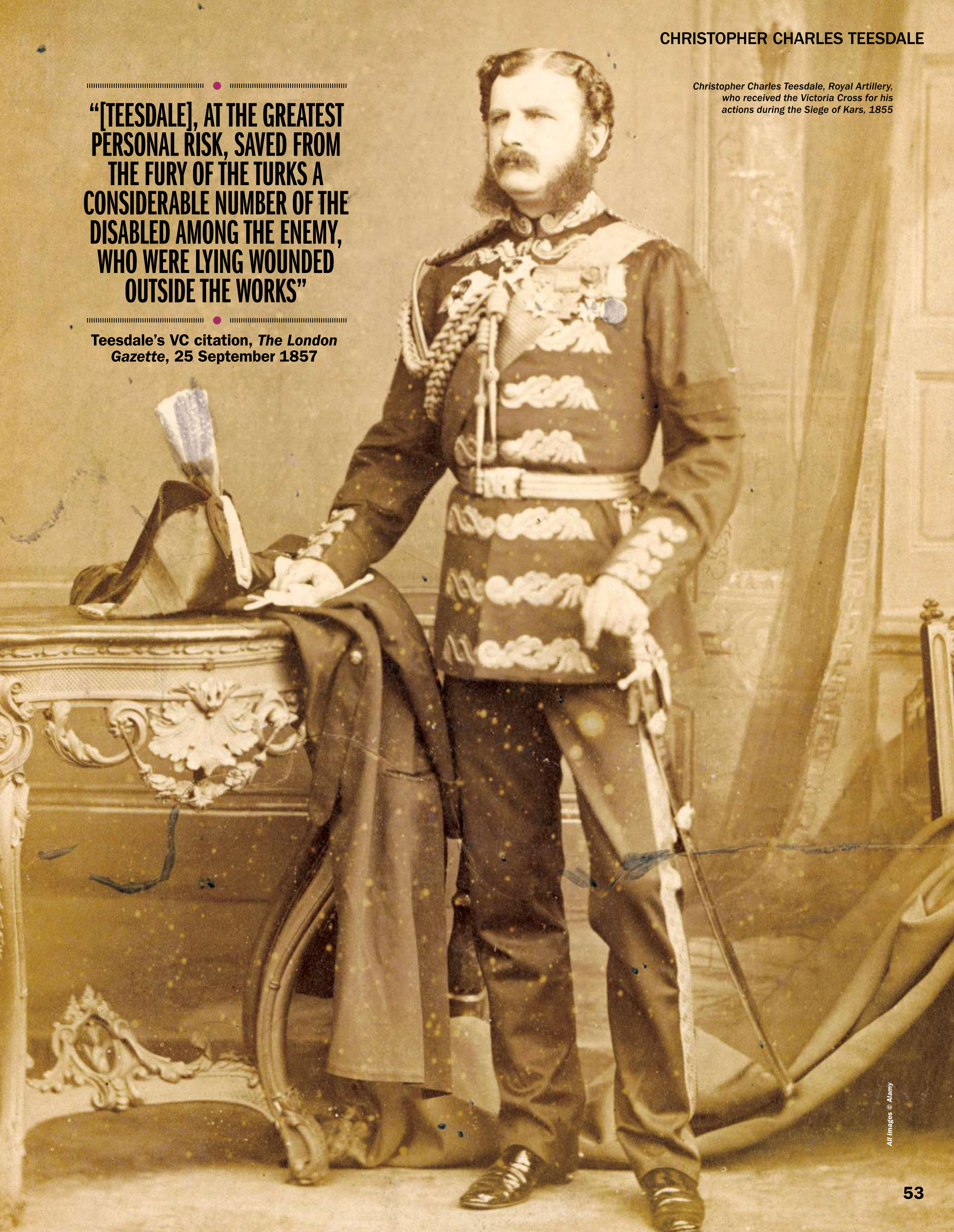
Alarming news arrived on 1 June 1855, when a messenger informed Williams that a large Russian force had assembled at Gumri with the intention of advancing on Kars. Williams and Teesdale immediately set off for the city, arriving on 7 June. Several days later, Teesdale went up to the Tahmasp batteries, from where, on 12 June, he conducted a reconnaissance of the Russian camp that had been established nearby. The Russian army advancing on Kars was estimated to be 25,000-strong. On the morning of the 16th, the Russians launched an attack but were driven off by Turkish artillery fire. Unable to take the city as quickly as they had hoped, the Russians decided to lay siege to Kars, although a second attack was mounted on 7 August, which was also beaten off by the defenders.



British officers and others during the defence of Kars

During late August and into early September, Teesdale was actively engaged in harassing Russian Cossacks and launching small attacks on Russian cavalry forces near the city. Unfortunately for the garrison, the weather began to change for the worse and much-needed supplies were being used up at an alarming rate. To compound matters, cholera broke out and the demoralised Turkish troops began to desert.

On 1 September Wilson noted how desperate the situation in the city was becoming: "The most is made of our provisions; the soldiers are reduced to half allowances of bread and meat or rice-butter. Sometimes 100 drachmas of biscuit instead of bread; nothing besides. No money. Musselman population, 3,000 rifles, will soon be reduced to starvation. Armenians are ordered to quit the town to-morrow. No barley, scarcely any forage. Cavalry reduced to walking skeletons, and sent out of garrison; artillery horses soon the same."



> “[TEESDALE], AT THE GREATEST PERSONAL RISK, SAVED FROM THE FURY OF THE TURKS A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF THE DISABLED AMONG THE ENEMY, WHO WERE LYING WOUNDED OUTSIDE THE WORKS”

Teesdale’s VC citation, *The London Gazette*, 25 September 1857

Christopher Charles Teesdale, Royal Artillery, who received the Victoria Cross for his actions during the Siege of Kars, 1855

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General Nikolay Muravyov, commanding the besieging Russian army, was concerned Ottoman forces would make a move on Kutaisi and Tiflis, which would cut his supply lines to Kars. He therefore decided to launch a large scale and rapid assault against the city before it was too late, despite not yet having worked out the weak points in Kars' defences and his troops being still unfamiliar with the terrain. Nevertheless, given the threat Muravyov felt he had little choice.

On the morning of 23 September, the Russians launched an attack on the city. However, they were again repulsed by the weakened but still determined defenders. The siege continued with smaller but regular sorties being made against the outer defences of Kars. Six days later, Teesdale volunteered to take command of the men who had been holding the most advanced part of the city's defences. This position was a key point in the defences, which the Russians finally attacked in force on the 29th.

Muravyov's renewed assault was supposed to be a night attack, but a group of Russian soldiers got lost in the dark and the main attack was postponed until the morning. Attacking in columns, the Russians suffered heavily in the face of brutal Turkish small arms fire. Nevertheless, some Russian troops were able to penetrate one of the redoubts.

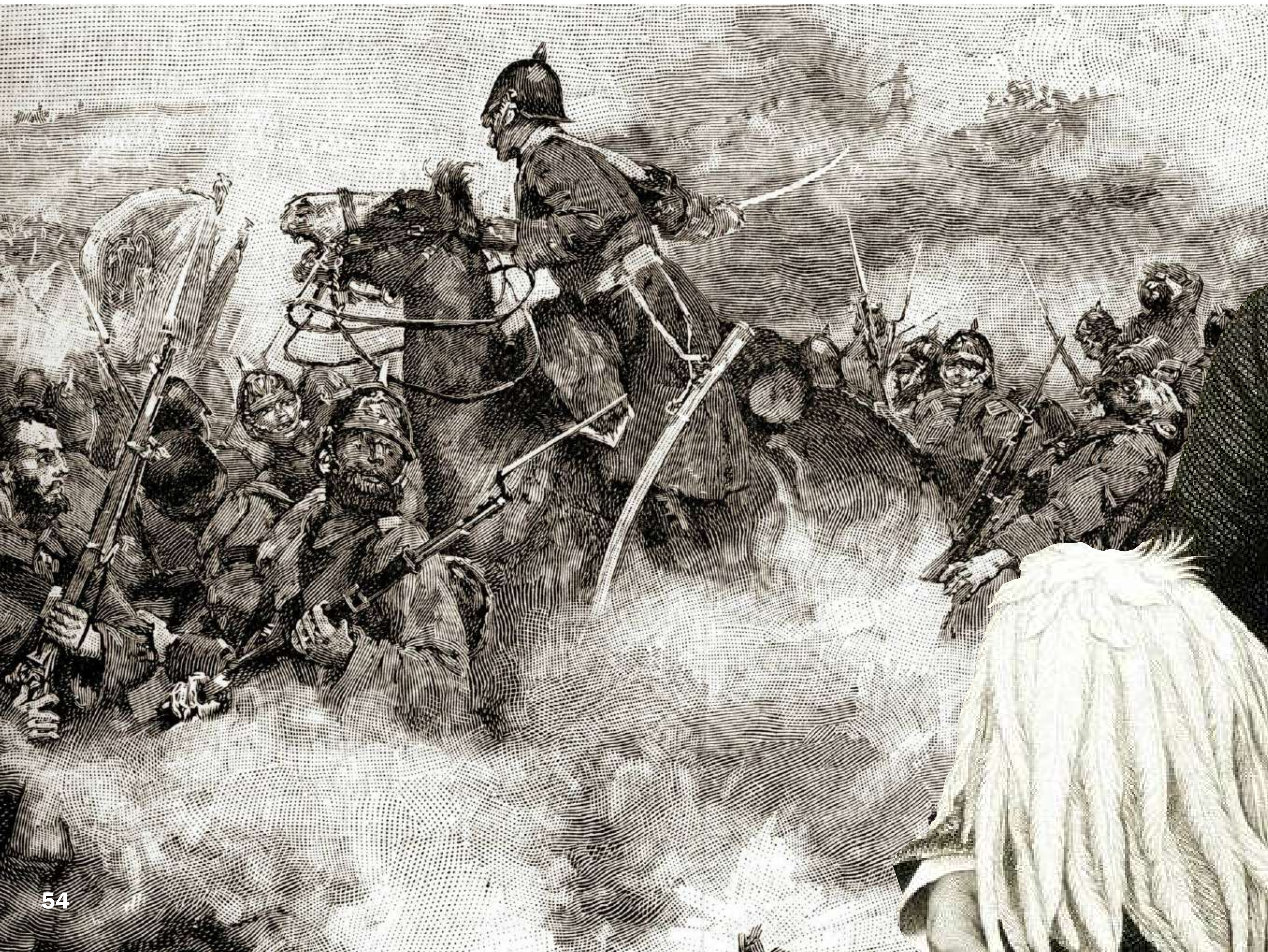
> **"...BY THROWING HIMSELF INTO THE MIDST OF THE ENEMY... HE ENCOURAGED THE GARRISON TO MAKE AN ATTACK, SO VIGOROUS, AS TO DRIVE OUT THE RUSSIANS THEREFROM, AND PREVENT ITS CAPTURE"**
>
> **Teesdale's VC Citation, *The London Gazette*, 25 September 1857**

Teesdale now threw himself into the fight, encouraging the Turkish soldiers to counterattack and drive the Russians out of the redoubt. According to Teesdale: "I rushed up into the salient already occupied by the enemy. This sudden impulse saved us. Those who had already penetrated were in a moment struck down on the platform where I stood and their gallant leader – as he was about to cross sword with mine – received a ball in the centre of his forehead and fell backwards into the ditch."

Despite Teesdale's efforts, the Russians were able to drive off some Turkish artillerymen, who abandoned their guns under a murderous fire. He moved again to the fore and managed to rally the gunners, and by his intrepid example persuaded them to return to their posts and bring their vital guns back into action.

Later, Teesdale led a charge at some enemy stragglers but was unexpectedly confronted by a strong Russian regiment. "The Turks still left alive in Tachmash tabia could no longer be restrained," he recalled. "Seeing our plight they burst forth like a pent-up torrent from the redoubt and rushed with the blind fury of wild animals to our assistance – and the Russian regiment seemed to melt before them. In a moment the ground was thick with corpses and the survivors flying as best each one might."

With the battle fast reaching its conclusion, Teesdale committed yet another courageous act. Several wounded Russian soldiers lay strewn on the ground outside the defences,



and some of the enraged defenders sought to take their revenge on these unfortunates and ensure their demise. However Teesdale, risking his own life, suddenly intervened and saved his maimed enemies. This act of kindness was witnessed by Muravyov, who later gratefully acknowledged the unexpected humanitarian act.

The battle ended in Russian defeat, with Muravyov calling off the attack just before noon having been unable to take the city. The Russian forces had suffered 7,500 casualties in just one day.

Nevertheless, the fate of Kars was ultimately sealed by a combination of disease ravaging the city and supplies of food and ammunition running dangerously low. It had been hoped that a relief force under Selim Pasha would come to the city's rescue but as the days passed all hope of salvation faded. Desertions among the starving and exhausted defenders grew and it was only a matter of time before the inevitable surrender of the garrison would come.

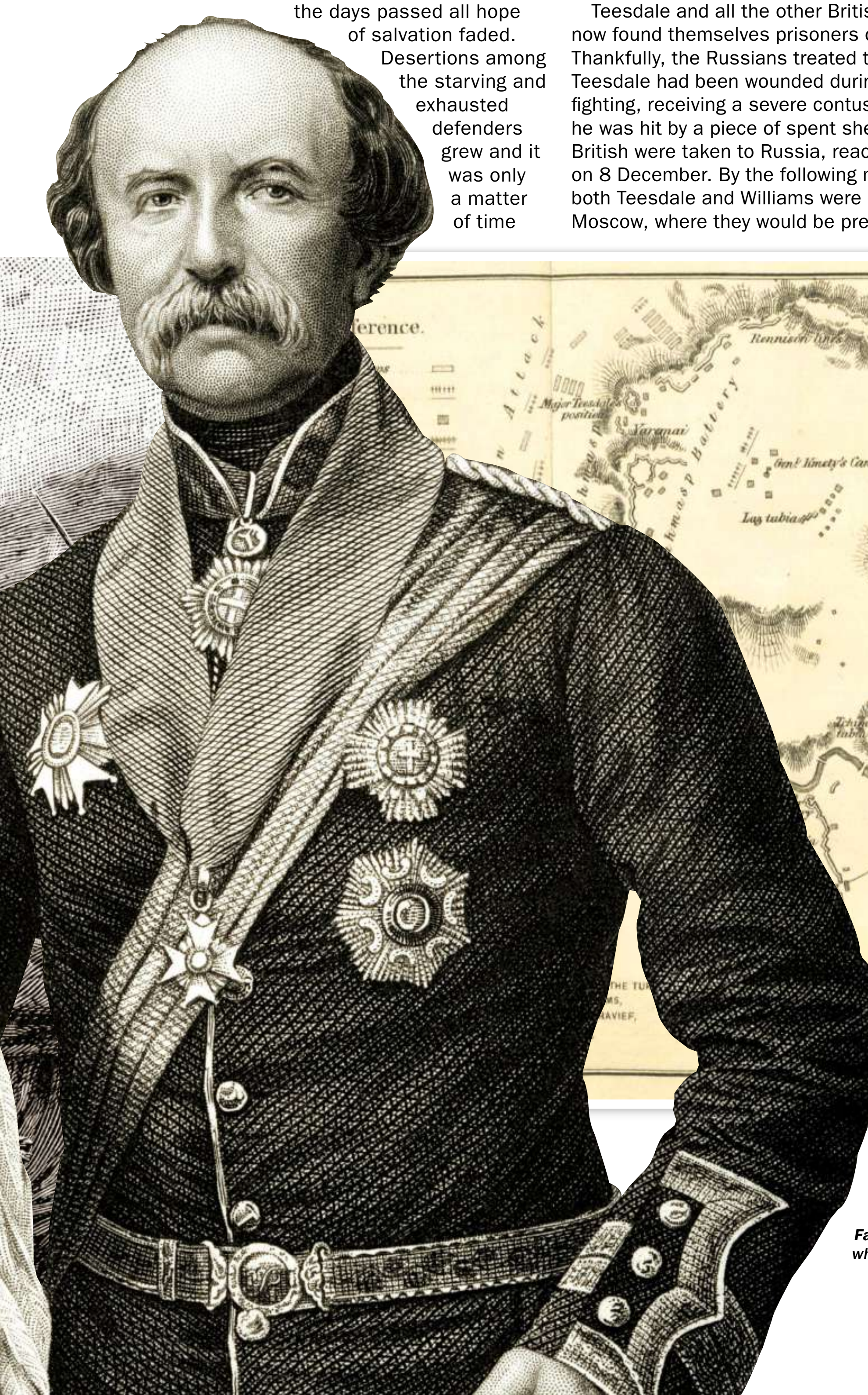
Moves for the surrender duly came on 24 November. Teesdale was sent out with a flag of truce to the Russian camp to seek a meeting with the opposing generals to discuss terms for capitulation. Talks were arranged for the following day, and on the 28th the garrison lay down its arms.

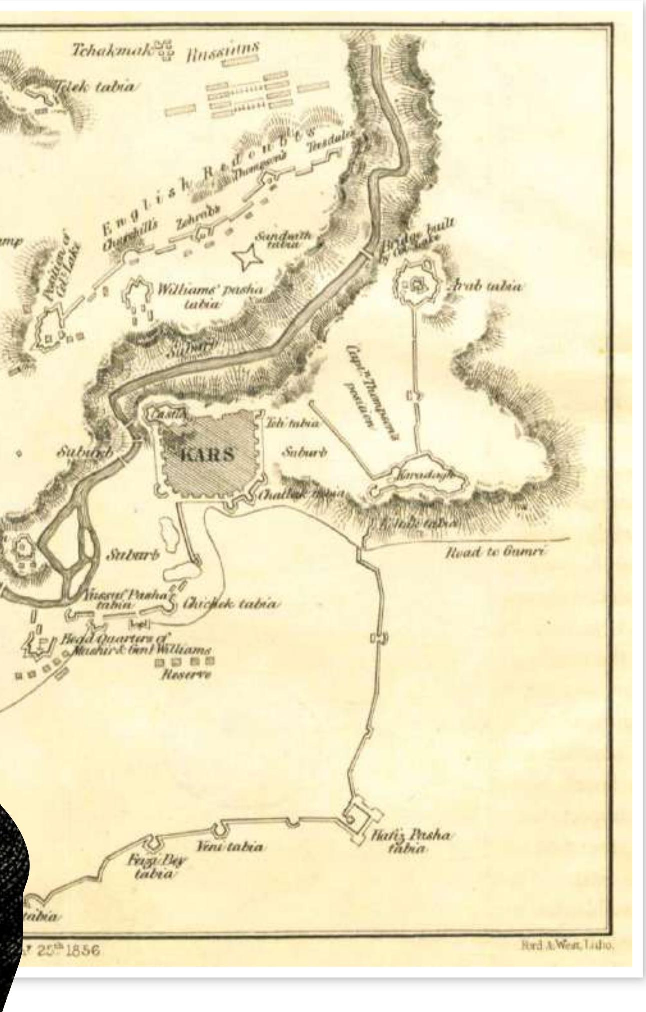
However, as a mark of respect for their resolute and honourable defence, Williams was granted the honour of marching his men out of the city bearing arms. An impressed Muravyov is reputed to have said to him: "General Williams, you have made yourself a name in history, and posterity will stand amazed at the endurance, courage and the discipline which the siege has called forth in the remains of the army."

Teesdale and all the other British officers now found themselves prisoners of war. Thankfully, the Russians treated them well. Teesdale had been wounded during the fighting, receiving a severe contusion when he was hit by a piece of spent shell. The British were taken to Russia, reaching Tiflis on 8 December. By the following month, both Teesdale and Williams were en route to Moscow, where they would be presented to Tsar Alexander II in March. Following their royal meeting, both men would later be granted liberty to return to England.

Williams was particularly impressed with Teesdale's conduct during the siege. In his 12 October 1855 dispatch he wrote: "My aide-de-camp, Teesdale, had charge of the central redoubt and fought like a lion." For his service at Kars, Teesdale would receive the Order of the Mejidiye and was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in the Turkish army.

More honours were to follow, including the highest that could be given by Britain. On 21 June 1856 Teesdale was made a CB and he was also made an Officer of the Légion d'honneur, receiving the medal for the defence of Kars. However, it would be on 25 September 1857, almost two years after the siege, that he was awarded the newly established Victoria Cross for his acts of gallantry during the defence. The citation for his VC was published in *The London Gazette* and mentioned not only his counterattacks but also his saving of the wounded Russians from the furious Turkish soldiers. The medal was presented to Teesdale by Queen Victoria on 28 November during a ceremony held in the Quadrangle of Windsor Castle, in which the entire Windsor garrison was in attendance.




Tchakmak
Russians
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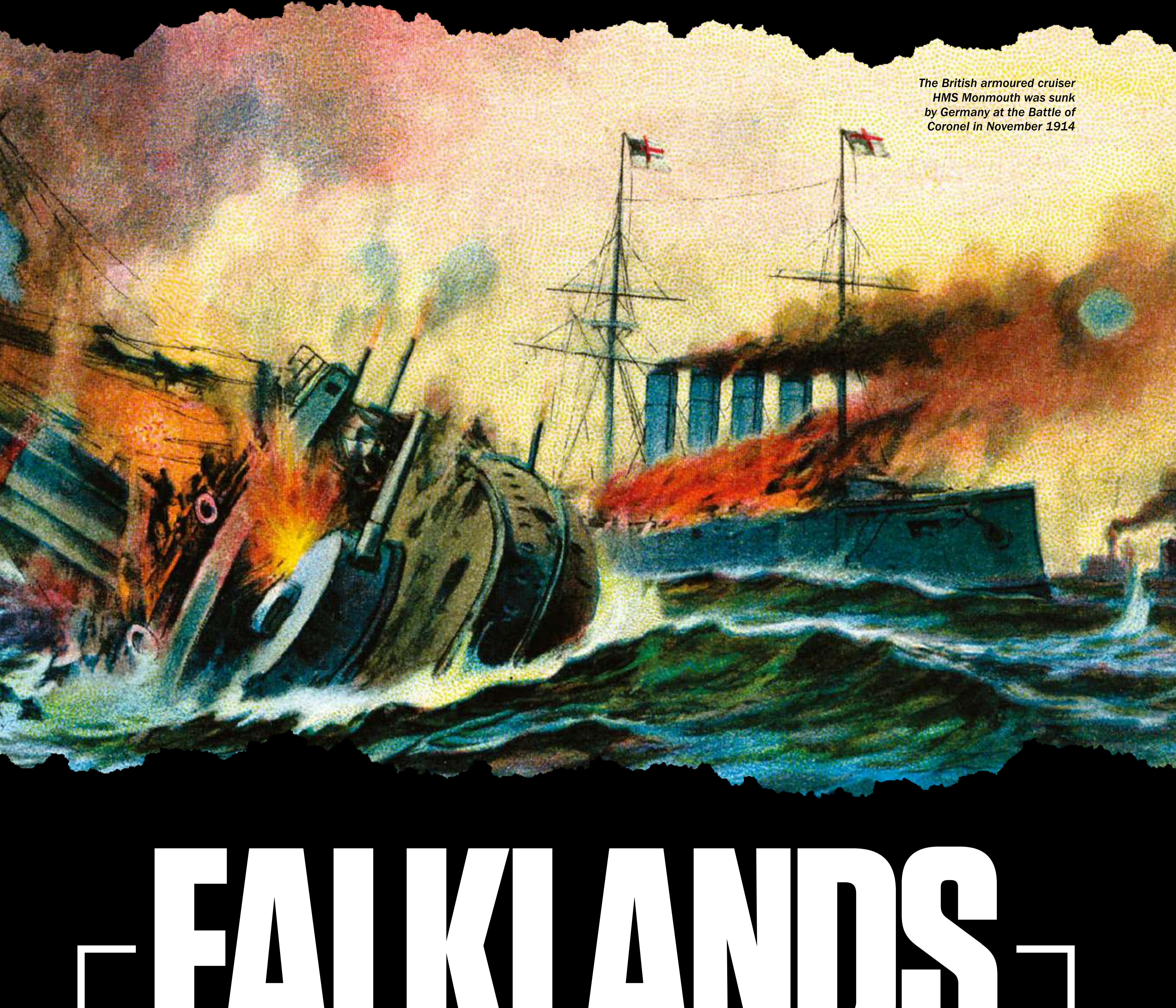
Major Teesdale's position
Yarumai
Gen! Kmety's Camp
Laz tabia
English Redoubts
Churchill's
Zohrab
Thompson
Teesdale
Sandwith tabia
Williams' pasha tabia
Bridge built by Lake
Arab tabia
Suburb
Castle
KARS
Tek tabia
Karadagh
Chaillar tabia
Road to Gumri
Yussuf Pasha tabia
Chichek tabia
Head Quarters of Mushir & Gen! Williams
Reserve
Hafiz Pasha tabia
Veni tabia
Fezi Bey tabia
25th 1856
Ford & West, Litho.

All images © Alamy

Above: *Contemporary map of the fortress of Kars, showing dispositions of both Ottoman and Russian forces during the siege*

Left: *General Sir William Fenwick Williams, the British officer commanding the Ottoman garrison during the Siege of Kars*

Far left: *A Russian attack is repulsed by the Ottoman garrison at Kars, during which Teesdale earned his Victoria Cross*



The British armoured cruiser HMS Monmouth was sunk by Germany at the Battle of Coronel in November 1914

FALKLANDS

SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG DISAGREEMENT

PART 2: 1833 – 1982

For hundreds of years this small group of South Atlantic islands have been the focus of trade missions, treaties and conflicts. In the second of his two-part series, former British Army Intelligence officer and now historian Nick Van Der Bijl examines the 150 years preceding the 1982 war

Contemporary accounts from Charles Darwin and Captain Robert FitzRoy, of HMS Beagle, suggest that settlers of various nationalities were encouraged to colonise the Falklands during the 19th century. The Falkland Islands Company was founded in 1851 to exploit the wild cattle descended from herds imported by the French, while sheep farming became the basis of the economy. In 1861, Argentina emerged after years of civil war as a country that welcomed immigration from Italy, Germany and Spain, and by the mid-20th century it had grown to become one of the top-ten wealthiest nations. In 1892, the Falklands was recognised to be a self-supporting British colony of about 2,000 people.

During the mid-19th century, the British Army order of battle consisted of the Regular Forces managed by the War Office and Militia Forces raised to maintain law and order under the control of county lord-lieutenants and governors in the colonies. In 1859, the War Office raised the Volunteer Force of rifle and artillery corps and placed them under War Office control in 1871. Governor Richard Moody had formed the 'Stanley Volunteers' during the Crimean War (1853-56). The unofficial 'Falkland Islands Volunteers' was mobilised in June 1892 when a Chilean steamer with about 200 soldiers on board from one of the belligerents of the Chilean Civil War docked in Port Stanley.

The World Wars

On 1 November 1914, in the early months of World War I, two Royal Navy cruisers were sunk with the loss of 1,655 men at the Battle of Coronel, off central Chile – there were no survivors. When Admiral Maximilian von Spee learnt from the wireless station at Valparaiso that there were no Royal Navy ships in Port Stanley, he planned a raid. On 8 December, Muriel Felton, of the Fitzroy sheep station, was telephoned from Port Stanley and told German ships were approaching from the south.

> “THE RIGHT OF OUR ARGENTINA TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE MALVINAS IS UNDENIABLE. DESPITE THIS, ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL NATIONS IN THE WORLD, ABUSING FORCE, KEEPS THEM IN ITS POWER”

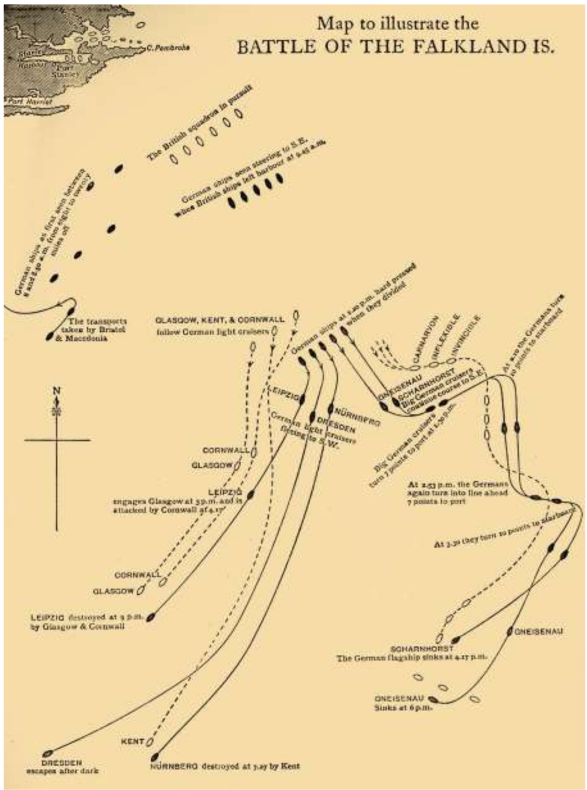
While Mrs Felton and a houseboy, Albert Kiddle, kept Army HQ informed, her two maids took it in turns to ride to and from Fitzroy Hill to report the German course. Christian Andreasen, a Danish sailor who had lived on the islands since 1907, also sent reports from Sapper Hill. The intelligence was reported to Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Sturdee, Commander-in-Chief South Atlantic and Pacific, and he ambushed the German ships off Port Stanley, sinking four with the loss of 1,800 sailors.

Among awards for the action was the OBE to Mrs Felton and silver plates to her maids. In an interview with a German naval officer in 1925, Admiral William Reginald Hall, the Director of Naval Intelligence, revealed that British cryptographers had fed false information to Admiral Spee that there were no ships at Port Stanley. In 1919, the Volunteers were renamed as the Falkland Islands Defence Force (FIDF).

Soon after World War II broke out, the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee intercepted Allied ships in the Atlantic, and the Royal Navy South American Division of four cruisers sailed to deal with her. On 13 December, the German ship was detected attacking a small convoy 240km off the River Plate estuary and HMS Exeter was detached to investigate – but it was badly damaged and made for the Falkland Islands to carry out repairs. The Graf Spee was also damaged and when the Uruguayan authorities allowed her to carry out 72 hours of repairs in Montevideo, HMS Ajax and HMS Achilles lurked in international waters. However, the damage was serious and the battleship was scuttled outside the Uruguayan limits.

When the Argentine press suggested that German warships would blockade the Magellan Straits, 33 men from the Anglo-Argentine community arrived at Port Stanley on 27 September offering to help defend the islands. Named the 'Tabaris Highlanders', most of the men were former Regular Army or Officer Training Corps, and they frequented a well-known Buenos Aires nightclub after which their unit had been named. While six

***Below:** Map illustrating the Battle of the Falkland Islands (8 December 1914) between the Royal Navy and Imperial German Navy. The German SMS Scharnhorst was sunk*


Map to illustrate the
BATTLE OF THE FALKLAND IS.
C. Pembroke
Port Stanley
Port Harriet
The British squadron in pursuit
German ships seen steering to S.E. when British ships left harbour at 9.45 a.m.
German ships as first seen between 8 and 8.30 a.m. from eight to twenty miles off
The transports taken by Bristol & Macedonia
GLASGOW, KENT, & CORNWALL follow German light cruisers
German ships at 1.20 p.m. hard pressed when they divided
CARNARVON
INFLEXIBLE
INVINCIBLE
N
LEIPZIG
NÜRNBERG
DRESDEN
German light cruisers fleeing to S.W.
GNEISENAU
SCHARNHORST
Big German cruisers continue course to S.E.
Big German cruisers turn 7 points to port at 1.30 p.m.
At 2.10 the Germans turn 10 points to starboard
CORNWALL
GLASGOW
LEIPZIG engages Glasgow at 3 p.m. and is attacked by Cornwall at 4.17
At 2.53 p.m. the Germans again turn into line ahead 7 points to port
At 3.30 they turn 10 points to starboard
CORNWALL
GLASGOW
LEIPZIG destroyed at 9 p.m. by Glasgow & Cornwall
GNEISENAU
SCHARNHORST The German flagship sinks at 4.17 p.m.
GNEISENAU Sinks at 6 p.m.
KENT
DRESDEN escapes after dark
NÜRNBERG destroyed at 7.27 by Kent

H.M.S. EXETER
EXETER

Two sailors on HMS Exeter give the thumbs-up on arrival in England after their role in defeating German battleship Admiral Graf Spee

All images © Getty

On 28 September 1966 Operation Condor saw 20 Argentines hijack this plane and force it to land at Stanley Airport. They surrendered the next day

© Alamy

© Getty

were rejected on medical and other grounds, the remainder were enlisted into the FIDF and initially contributed to digging defences. Once the immediate threat of invasion had faded, the Highlanders returned to Argentina on 8 December – except for 22 who enlisted.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 the threat of invasion increased once again, and 200 children were evacuated from Port Stanley to 14 settlements. They did not return home until the autumn of 1942. The threat resulted in Force 122 of 11th West Yorkshire Regiment, 359th Heavy Artillery Battery equipped with 40mm light anti-aircraft Bofors guns and the coastal defence 3.7-inch Heavy Artillery Battery being sent, along with a radar and semi-automatic plotter.

Three Bofors covered the defence of the radio station and oil tanks, however boggy ground and rocky outcrops made it difficult to position the guns. The troops were accommodated in Nissen huts erected on almost every available open space in Port Stanley, including along Ross Road.

No enemy activity was identified and in October 1943; 359th Battery took responsibility for coast radar and then in December the smaller Force 132 built around the Royal Scots replaced Force 122. When 359th Battery returned to UK in February 1944, two Bofors guns were transferred to the FIDF. The Battery was disbanded in May 1944 and dispersed among Royal Artillery, Royal Army Service Corps and infantry units.

Argentina's strategy

The Argentine strategy was based on principles developed by Alfredo Palacios, a socialist lawyer who in 1934 published *Islas Malvinas, un Archipielago Argentina* (*The Falkland Islands, an Argentine Archipelago*) in which he wrote: “The right of our Argentina to the sovereignty of the Malvinas is undeniable. Despite this, one of the most powerful nations in the world, abusing force, keeps them in its power.”

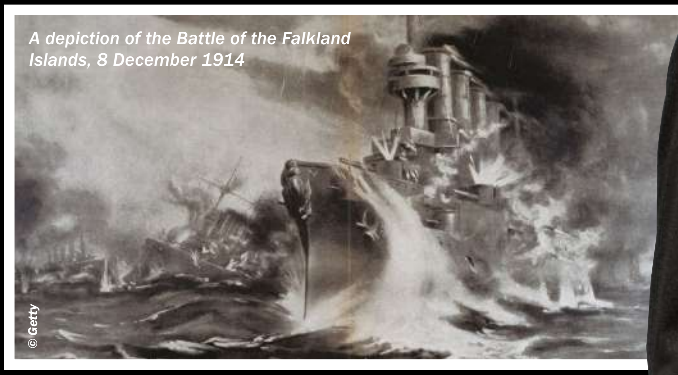
“20 ARMED MEN HIJACKED ARGENTINE AIRLINES FLIGHT 648 AND FORCED THE CAPTAIN TO LAND AT STANLEY AIRPORT WHERE THEY TOOK FOUR FALKLANDERS HOSTAGE”

German subversion in 1939 led to the forming of the ‘Committee for the Recovery of the Malvinas’ specifically to take advantage of the outbreak of war as a diversion from domestic issues.

Captain Ernesto Villanueva, an Argentine navy officer, presenting his 34-page paper *Army and Navy Co-operation: Occupation of the Malvinas Islands* at the Naval War School on 26 September 1941, suggested that while the Falkland Islands were vital to Argentina, “Great Britain was too occupied in other world theatres to address the luck of a few small colonial islands”.

Villanueva proposed that troops would land at Port Stanley at dawn, with ships and aircraft providing protection from the artillery. The task force would be made up of a battalion of marines distributed in two battleships, two heavy cruisers, a light cruiser, 12 torpedo boats, a tanker, nine tracking vessels and 750 marines “taking control of Port Stanley”. Argentina promoted its policy to recover Islas Malvinas as British colonies gained their independence when the United Nations emerged in 1945.

The military connection between Argentina and Germany had begun in the late 19th century and evolved when Argentine strategists favoured backing the strongest war machine in Europe. From the 1890s, the armed forces underwent continuous modernisation and professionalism, which was then followed by other South American states. By 1939 much of the financing of defence,



A depiction of the Battle of the Falkland Islands, 8 December 1914

© Getty

The German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee is scuttled off Montevideo, Uruguay, after the Battle of River Plate, 17 December 1939

Leopoldo Galtieri and members of his junta government pictured in 1982. The junta came to an end shortly after the Falklands War

© Getty

construction and the production of chemical, pharmaceutical and electrical goods was through German banks.

Argentina pursued a neutral policy after the United States entered the war in December 1941 but failed to persuade Chile, Paraguay and Peru to join a neutral bloc. Many Argentines supported Germany and the Allies were aware of the threat from espionage, sabotage, subversion and smuggling. A military coup d'etat in June 1943 compromised German espionage operations and led to the severing of diplomatic relations with Germany and Japan in January 1944. However, Colonel Juan Peron led a palace revolt that installed a government that supported Axis-controlled firms and tolerated Axis propaganda.

The US government applied economic pressure and as the Axis collapsed in early 1945, Argentina liquidated Axis construction and industrial companies and then formally declared war on the Axis in late March 1945. The United States gradually took a conciliatory approach towards Argentina as a result of the Mexico City Conference (February-March 1945) and the steps it took regarding Axis assets.

The Argentine government issued a decree in March 1945 stipulating that Axis-controlled firms would be placed under government control and possession, but delayed taking action for so long that the managers of these firms had ample time to distribute or dissipate their assets. The US State Department prepared *The Blue Book* that listed Axis economic support. Argentina then became a haven for Nazis escaping Allied investigation, Adolf Eichmann being one of many.

General Leopoldo Galtieri makes a public address in Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 1982

© Getty

Post-war tensions

In 1946 General Juan Perón was elected president, and while his 'buy now, pay later' policy was popular among the Argentine working class, Argentina began to drop down the Gross Domestic Product rankings. When in December 1947 Perón extended territorial claims to Antarctica and the South Atlantic islands, the British warned him that the Royal Navy had recent extensive combat experience and that an attack on the Falklands would be an attack on Great Britain. The British offered three times to take the dispute to the International Court of Justice – in 1947, 1948 and 1955 – but Argentina declined. Perón's rule, or rather misrule, was followed by successive military juntas governing Argentina.

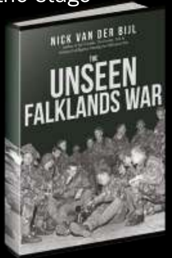
In 1960 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to "bring to an end everywhere colonialism in all its forms" and passed Resolution 2065 five years later demanding that both governments negotiate an agreement within the objectives of the UN Charter and interests of the population. But annual meetings failed to reach agreement on sovereignty, with Great Britain insisting such a decision must be reached democratically, a concept rejected by Argentina.

On 28 September 1966 in Operativo Cóndor (Operation Condor), 20 armed Argentines hijacked Argentine Airlines Flight 648 and forced the captain to land at Stanley Airport, where they took four Falklanders hostage and distributed pamphlets claiming the Falklands was within Argentine sovereignty.

In expectation of public support, the hijackers planned to occupy Government House and force Argentina to invade the disputed territory. But the hijackers were deprived of food, water and sleep by the Royal Marines, the FIDF and the Falklands Police. In spite of popular demonstrations in Argentina supporting the operation, the hijackers surrendered the next morning and were transferred to the Argentine authorities.

Despite this, London and Buenos Aries strengthened economic ties with the 1971 Communications Agreement, along with an air route using a Grumman HU-16b Albatross amphibious seaplane from Comodoro Rivadavia in southern Argentina to Stanley Harbour.

However, from 1976 Argentina's National Reorganization Process military dictatorship was associated with widespread murders, breaches of human rights, disappearances and the torture of thousands of alleged opponents, driving a once-prosperous country into economic disaster by 1980. It was thought that a successful overseas venture would rally the country and distract the opposition – the junta citing the 1833 British 'occupation' of Las Malvinas as one example of a colonial land grab of territory that it said belonged to Argentina. And so the stage was set for the Argentine invasion in 1982.



Nick Van Der Bijl's book *The Unseen Falklands War* is available now from Amberley Publishing

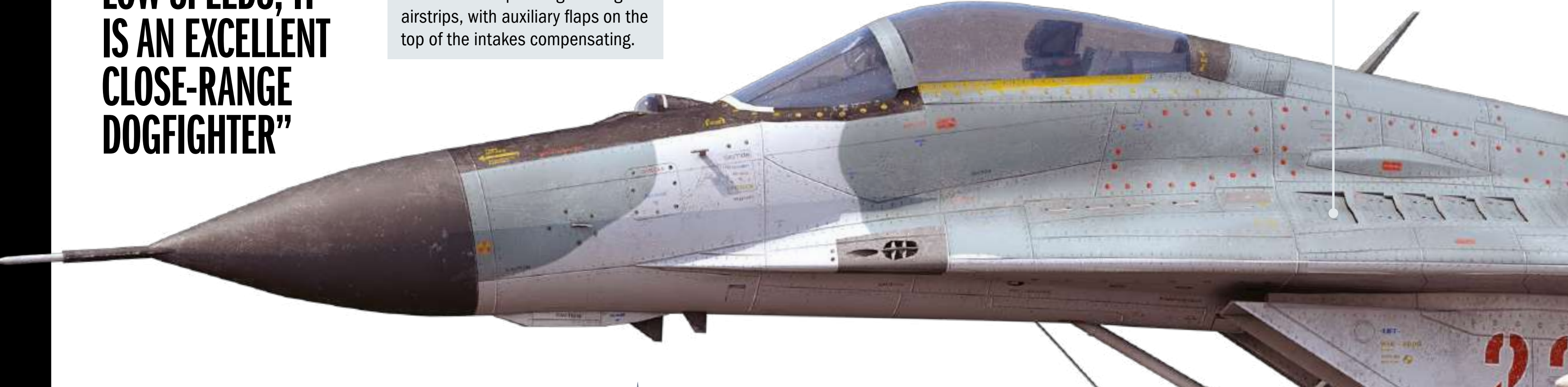
MIG 29 FULCRUM

This late Cold War fighter-bomber has flown for over four decades

WORDS **STUART HADAWAY**

> “HIGHLY AGILE, ESPECIALLY AT LOW SPEEDS, IT IS AN EXCELLENT CLOSE-RANGE DOGFIGHTER”

ADJUSTABLE AIR INTAKES
Adjustable ramps over the air intakes can narrow or even close to avoid sucking in detritus at low level or while operating on rough airstrips, with auxiliary flaps on the top of the intakes compensating.



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Left: *A pair of Slovakian Fulcrums on patrol*

When it entered service with the Warsaw Pact in the early 1980s, stories of the MiG 29's potency spread alarm among the NATO powers. Fast, with a top speed of over twice the speed of sound and yet incredibly nimble, the Mig 29 seemed to outclass even the latest Western types. Experience and exposure to the type post-Cold War tempered its reputation somewhat, but it is still an extremely capable fighter. Highly agile, especially at low speeds, it is an excellent close-range dogfighter. However, it has been found to be lacking in longer range engagements, with neither the avionics nor the weaponry for the 'beyond visual range' combat more common today.

It would eventually see service in nearly 30 variants in around 40 nations, and has seen combat in many campaigns. It continues to serve in several air forces around the world, including former Soviet countries such as Poland and Ukraine. The Russian air force operates the most recent development, which was introduced into service in 2019 as the MiG 35.

MIKOYAN MIG 29 FULCRUM

COMMISSIONED:	1977
ORIGIN	SOVIET UNION
LENGTH	17.32M (56FT 10IN)
WINGSPAN	11.36M (37FT 2IN)
ENGINE	2 X KLIMOV RD-33 TURBOFAN
CREW	1
PRIMARY WEAPON	6-8 SHORT OR MEDIUM RANGE AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES, 1 X GSH-30-1 30MM CANNON
SECONDARY WEAPON	UNGUIDED BOMBS AND ROCKETS

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Left: *Polish Air Force display team MiG 29*

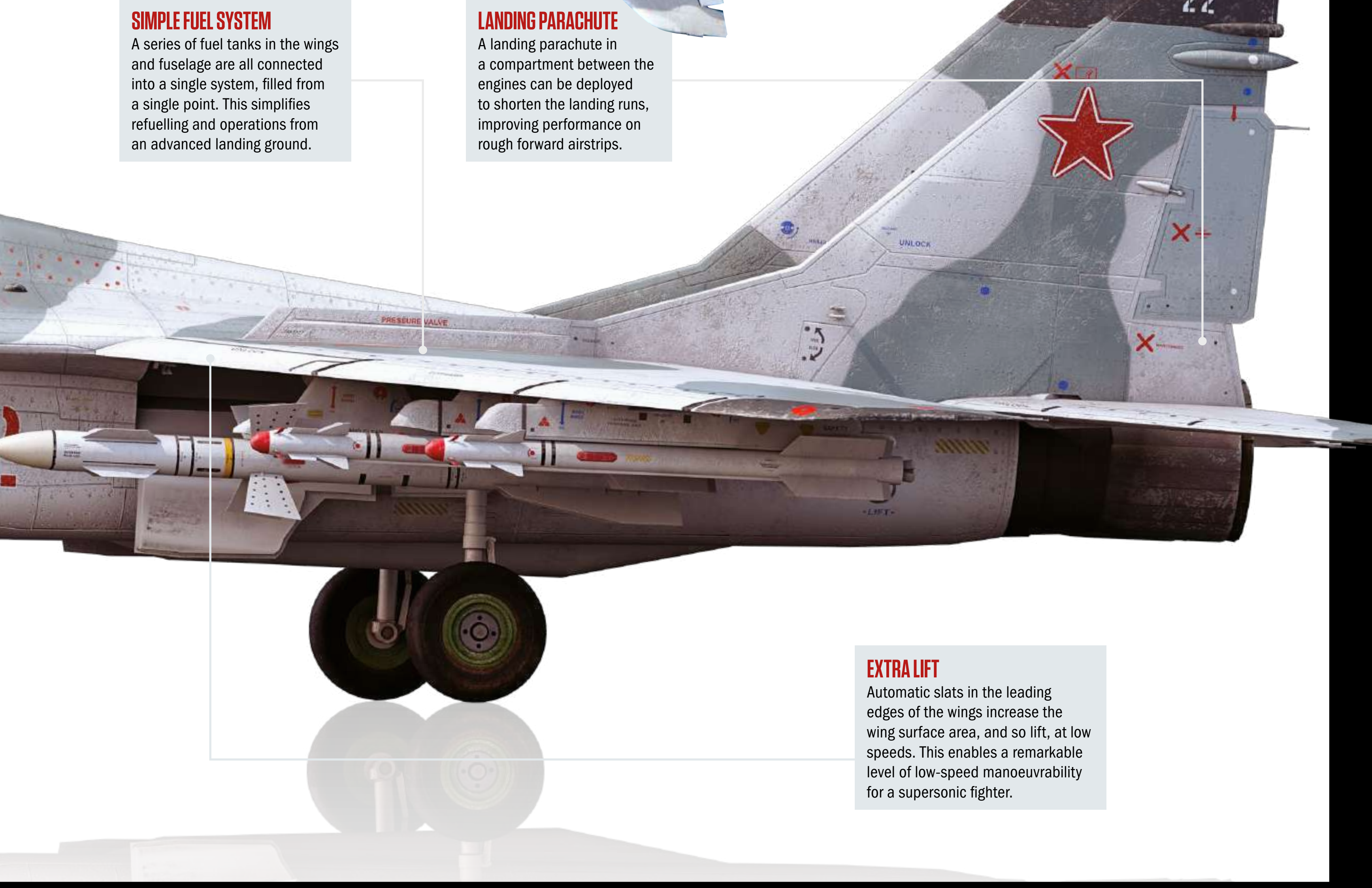


Illustration: Nicholas Forder

SIMPLE FUEL SYSTEM

A series of fuel tanks in the wings and fuselage are all connected into a single system, filled from a single point. This simplifies refuelling and operations from an advanced landing ground.

LANDING PARACHUTE

A landing parachute in a compartment between the engines can be deployed to shorten the landing runs, improving performance on rough forward airstrips.

EXTRA LIFT

Automatic slats in the leading edges of the wings increase the wing surface area, and so lift, at low speeds. This enables a remarkable level of low-speed manoeuvrability for a supersonic fighter.

ARMAMENT

The Fulcrum has pylons for up to eight weapons and often carries a mixture of ordnance. One of the MiG's shortcomings has always been the lack of a long-range engagement ability, but it can carry both the AA-10A 'Alamo' medium-range and the excellent AA-11 'Archer' short-range 'dogfight' missile. The Archer has an excellent engagement envelope, surpassing even the AIM-9 Sidewinder for in-close work. The Fulcrum carries a 30mm cannon for dogfighting and ground attack with 150 (later 100) rounds. The fighter can also carry a range of unguided bombs or rockets.

***Right:** A Polish MiG 29 with external tank between the engines and single missile on the port inner pylon*

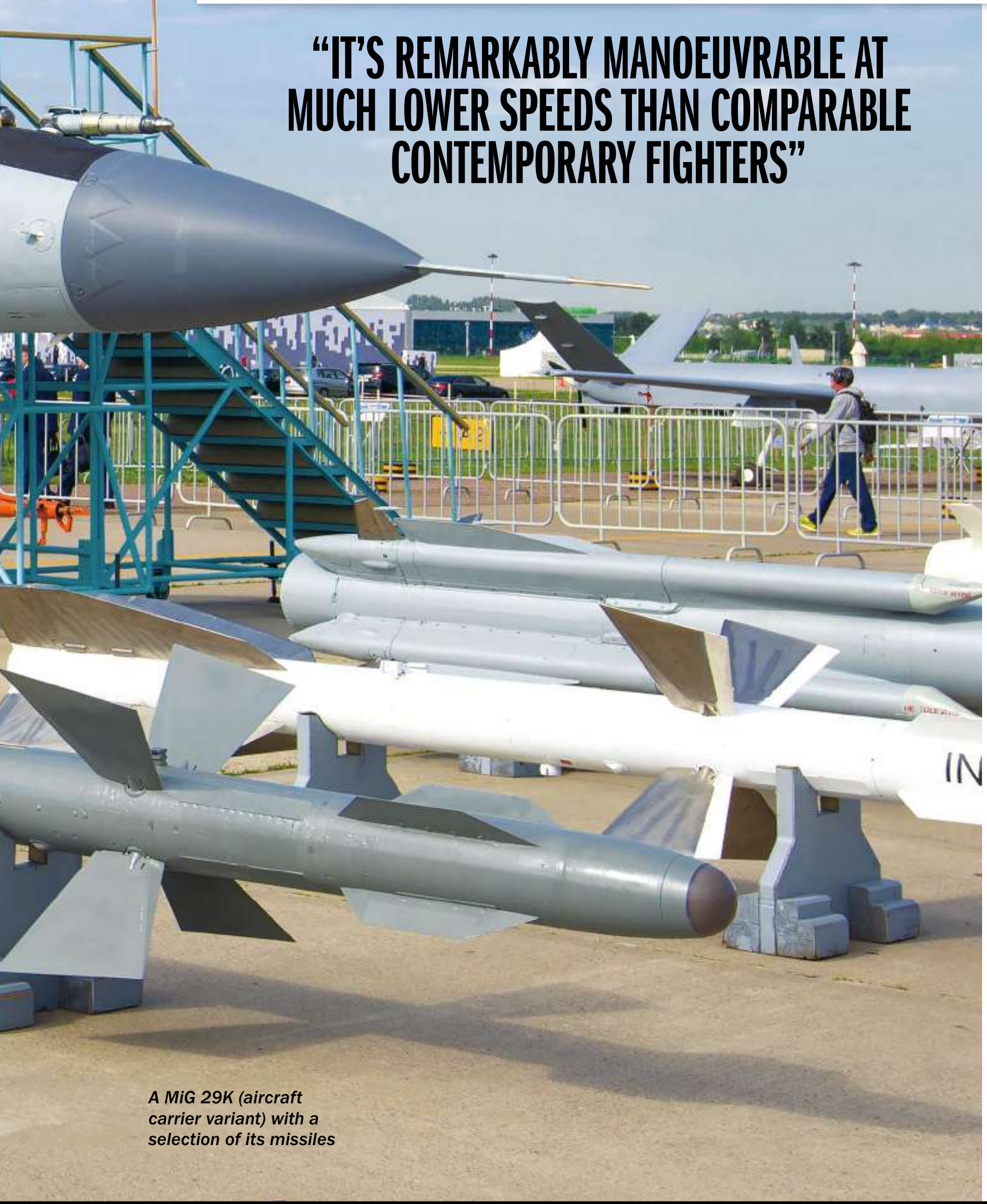
***Left:** A Ukrainian MiG 29 displays a mixture of unguided bombs and rocket pods.*

The MiG 29 is astonishingly agile, even at low speeds and altitudes

DESIGN

The Fulcrum was designed around a broad airframe, with the fuselage holding two widely spaced engines. The large surface area provides additional lift and lower wing-loading, adding to the agility of the airframe. Automatic slats in the leading edge of fixed wings deploy at low speeds and enable the MiG to remain remarkably manoeuvrable at much lower speeds than comparable contemporary fighters. The design is simple, rugged and easily maintained, suitable for use on rough forward strips as well as established airfields.

> “IT’S REMARKABLY MANOEUVRABLE AT MUCH LOWER SPEEDS THAN COMPARABLE CONTEMPORARY FIGHTERS”



A MiG 29K (aircraft carrier variant) with a selection of its missiles

ENGINE

The MiG 29 is powered by two Klimov RD-33 turbofans, rated at 50kN (11,200lbf) thrust dry and 81.3kN (18,300lbf) thrust on afterburner. They can push the aircraft to Mach 2.25, and with internal tanks in the wings and fuselage have a range of 1,500km. With external tanks, this can be pushed to 2,100km. Variable intake ramps optimise the air flow into the engines, and they can also be closed to avoid ingesting damaging material at low level or on rough airstrips.

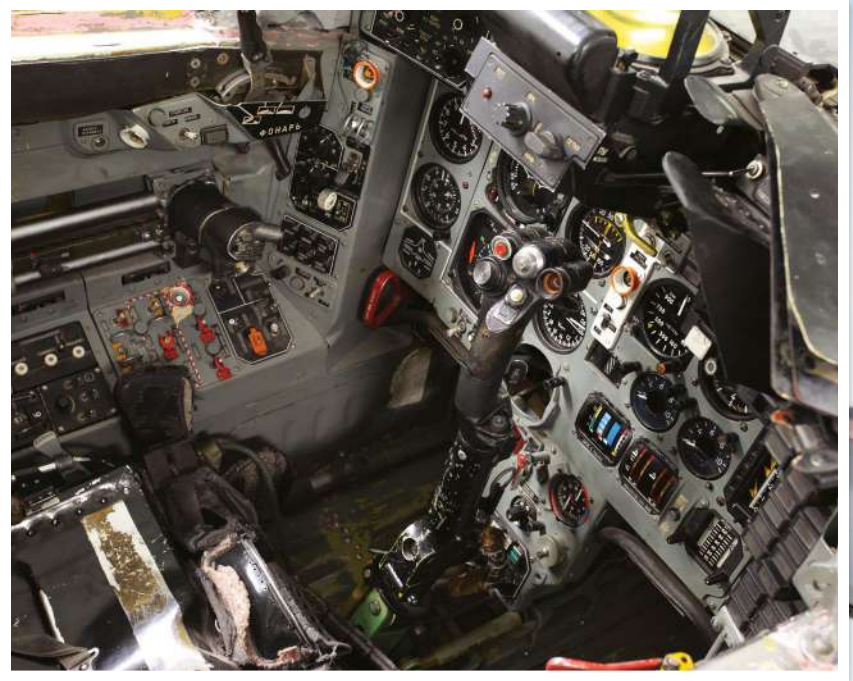
The engines are widely spaced, increasing the surface (and lift) area of the fuselage

A Klimov RD-33 on display in Russia

All images © Alamy

COCKPIT

The cockpit sits high, giving excellent visibility for dogfighting; the more modern types include a helmet-mounted sight to aid close-range combat. However, the MiG's avionics leave the pilot's situational awareness over longer ranges lacking. Soviet doctrine that fighters be controlled tightly from the ground meant that radar and navigational aids for the pilot were a secondary concern for designers, because that information would be passed up by the controllers. This situation has improved in more recent variants, with some also incorporating digital ('glass') instrument panels.



The MiG's cockpit is perhaps more basic than might be supposed, lacking advanced navigation or radar equipment

The pilot sits high, with an excellent field of view

> “SOME FORMER WARSAW PACT NATIONS CONTINUED TO USE THE TYPE AFTER THE FALL OF THE IRON CURTAIN, WITH POLAND AND UKRAINE STILL OPERATING THE TYPE TODAY”

SERVICE HISTORY

The MiG 29 first flew in 1977, fulfilling a Soviet requirement for a heavy fighter comparable to recent NATO designs such as the F-14 Tomcat and F-15 Eagle. Entering service in 1982, it was soon used by other Warsaw Pact nations. The type was acquired by India, and Soviet-backed nations across the Middle East and North Africa including Syria, Iraq and Libya. Some former Warsaw Pact nations continued to use the type after the fall of the Iron Curtain, with Poland and Ukraine still operating the type today. The aircraft used by the East German air force allowed NATO to directly operate and assess the type in the 1990s after reunification. The Fulcrum has seen combat with the Indian Air Force, with the Iraqis during the First Gulf War, and with Russian forces in their ‘small wars’ in Georgia and Syria. Most recently it’s been used on both sides in Ukraine.

A Ukrainian Air Force MiG 29 coming in to land

A Polish MiG 29, pictured in 1991

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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover the Imperial War Museum's Falkland 40 collection, Bletchley Park's new intelligence exhibition, and the campaign to save the Solebay Tapestry

Imperial War Museum commemorates Falklands War

In recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War, the Imperial War Museum will display a never-before-seen collection of items

Soldiers of 1/7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles with a captured Argentine anti-aircraft gun at Goose Green airfield on 4 June 1982

IWM London and IWM North will jointly host new exhibits showcasing the story and legacy of the 1982 Falklands War. The expansive collection, largely never seen before by the public, is to run alongside a digital programme that will commemorate the costly campaign fought between British and Argentine forces exactly four decades ago.

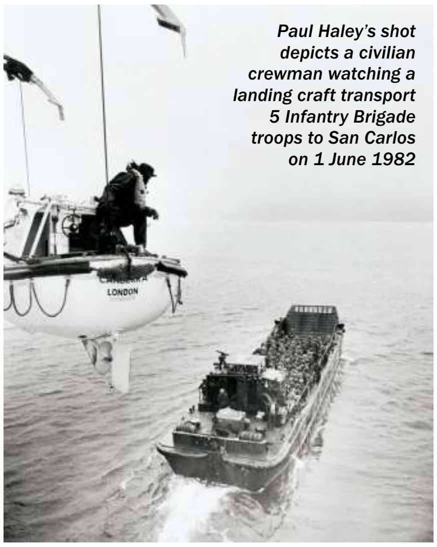
The display at IWM London will feature powerful eyewitness accounts, personal effects and artistic interpretations of what transpired on the Falklands Islands. This includes drawings by Linda Kitson, the first female artist commissioned by the Imperial War Museum to accompany troops into battle, and still images by photographer Paul RG Haley, who documented the war for *Soldier Magazine* and captured critical campaign moments such as the landings at San Carlos and the advance on Port Stanley.

Haley, whose photos will likewise be projected in the IWM North galleries, says: "I'm very flattered to have this body of work added to the IWM archives and I hope it will prove useful to many over the years to come… In particular, I hope my photographs will bear witness to the effort, suffering and sacrifice which I witnessed during those difficult days."

An equally moving testimony to the fierce action is the newly digitised footage available at IWM North, accompanied by artwork from Michael Peel – the subject of which was inspired by a remark then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher made following the British recapture of South Georgia. The Manchester-based museum will also display objects related to veterans, enabling visitors to appreciate the experiences of service personnel, not least the 255 British and 649 Argentinian men who gave their lives for their respective countries.

The digital aspect of the Falklands commemorations begins with a new episode of IWM's *Conflict of Interest* podcast, as actor Katherine Parkinson and the museum's John Beales explore why the Falklands War happened, how it played out, and its impact on British-Argentine relations. Meanwhile, on IWM's YouTube channel a series of five short films will be released on the extraordinary land, sea and air operations involved in retaking the islands.

Hilary Roberts, a senior curator at the Imperial War Museum, says: "Today we have a much better understanding of the pivotal nature of the Falklands conflict. Its political, military, social and cultural consequences continue to resonate today. This anniversary is an opportunity to consider these consequences while telling the story of the Falklands conflict through the testimony of the veterans and eyewitnesses who were there."



Paul Haley's shot depicts a civilian crewman watching a landing craft transport 5 Infantry Brigade troops to San Carlos on 1 June 1982

For more information visit: iwm.org.uk

Images © IWM

© Bletchley Park Trust

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Wartime intelligence exhibition at Bletchley Park

Once a secretive operation of the Second World War, Bletchley Park Museum has now unveiled a new exhibition dedicated to the role of codebreakers

Situated near Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, the former wartime facility and present-day museum known as Bletchley Park – a name synonymous with codebreaking – has opened its largest ever exhibition. The permanent fixture, entitled The Intelligence Factory, seeks to highlight the personal stories of those involved in the vast and secretive operation, from tracking ships to handling data to recruiting, feeding and housing thousands of staff.

Unveiled on 28 April 2022, the newly restored Block A, which houses the exhibition, has been made available to visitors for the first time in Bletchley Park's history. Featured within are numerous fascinating objects, including a Hagelin C-39s cipher machine and an original Hollerith machine. A contemporary interactive recreation of the Plotting Room used by naval intelligence officers for safeguarding Allied vessels has also been installed, painstakingly put together through veterans' accounts as no known photographs exist.

Alongside The Intelligence Factory, an area of Block A has been adapted into a gallery that will host temporary exhibitions. The first 18-month running display, called The Art of Data: Making Sense of the World, draws inspiration from the techniques utilised by codebreakers to manage information at scale while focusing on how data visualisation helps people understand modern society. Both the permanent and temporary exhibitions, as well as the rest of Bletchley Park, can be explored with a general admission ticket.

Recognising the opening of Block A as a milestone in the historic site's development, Peronel Craddock, head of programmes at The Bletchley Park Trust, says: "The Intelligence Factory will explore how pioneering potential of the world's first intelligence organisation was realised during its busiest years and the legacy that is still felt to this day."

For more information: bletchleypark.org.uk

Solebay Tapestry restoration works

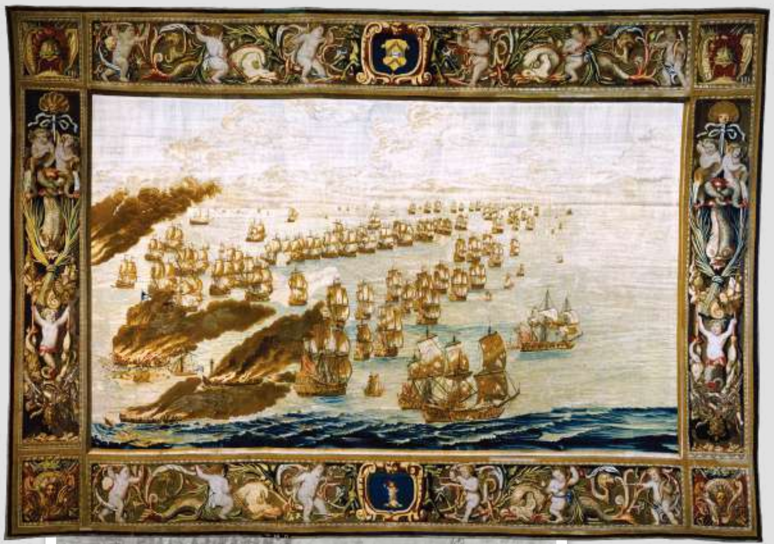
In a bid to save the iconic Solebay Tapestry, Royal Museums Greenwich has begun a conservation project for the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Solebay

Part of a series of tapestries to mark the 1672 Battle of Solebay, *The Burning of the Royal James* depicts the dramatic climax of the naval engagement between the English and the Dutch in what became the first battle of the Third Anglo-Dutch War. It is the only remaining *Solebay Tapestry* in the collection of the Queen's House, Greenwich – belonging to the National Maritime Museum of the Royal Museums Greenwich – and was designed by the father and son team Willem Van de Velde the Elder and Younger around 350 years ago.

However, in the centuries since its creation, fading dyes and light damage to the silk and wool have muted its once vibrant colours, obscured the fine craftsmanship showcased in its details and fundamentally resulted in its structural instability. This is set to change following the announcement of a significant conservation project to restore it to its former glory.

Royal Museums Greenwich has successfully launched a crowdfunding campaign through Art Happens with Art Fund to raise money towards saving *The Burning of the Royal James*. With the first phase of restoration having been completed in 2021, which involved an intricate cleaning process to assess the damage, the donations will support the vital work required in preserving the *Solebay Tapestry* while protecting it from further deterioration. By February 2023, it is hoped that the piece will return to the Queen's House for an exhibition celebrating three-and-a-half centuries since the Van de Veldes' arrival in England.

For more information: artfund.org./save-solebay



Images © National Maritime Museum, London

Commissioned by Charles II and James, Duke of York, the Solebay Tapestry was created by two of the most sought-after marine artists of the 17th century

Left: *The Burning of the Royal James featured prominently behind George VI during his speech at the opening of the National Maritime Museum in 1937*

WWII THIS MONTH...

MAY 1942

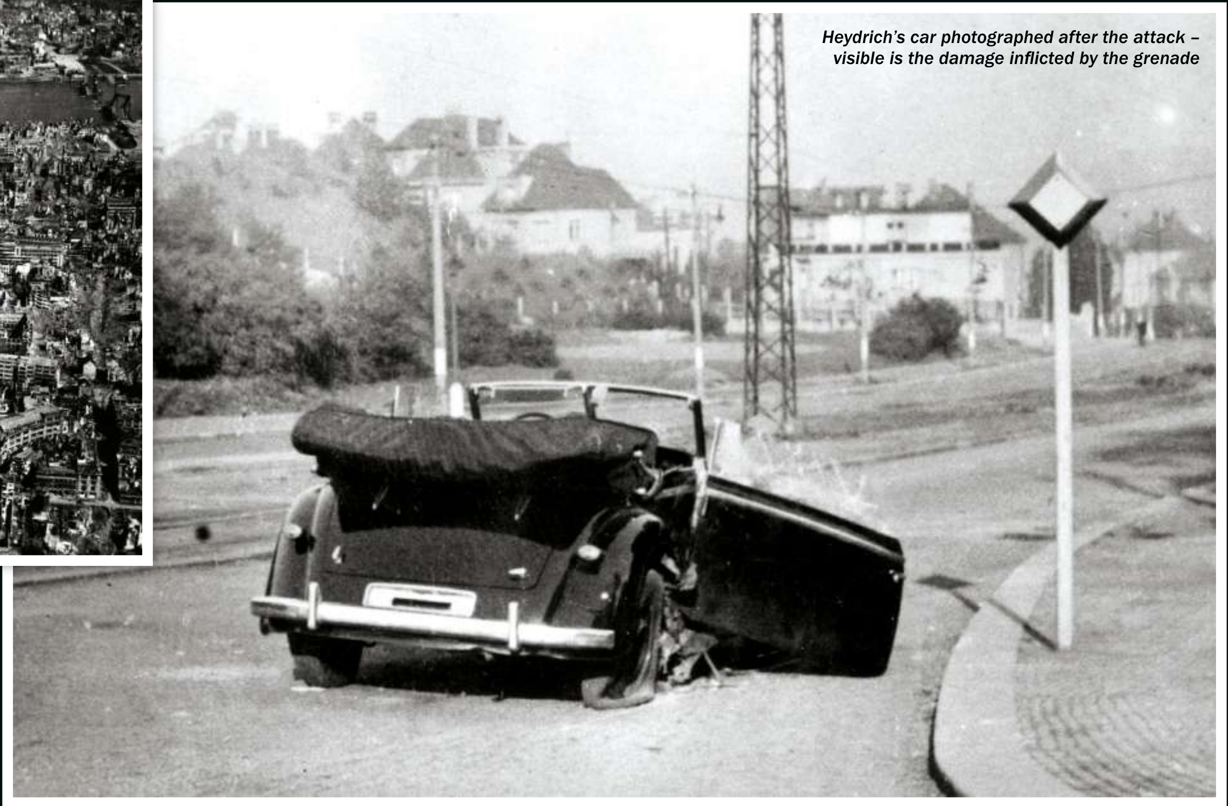
To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

Air crew who were involved in the raid on Cologne

***Inset right:** An aerial view of Cologne in the aftermath of the lengthy bombing campaign*

THE THOUSAND-BOMBER RAID

On the night of 30-31 May RAF Bomber Command conducted its first 1,000-bomber raid on Germany. The target of the raid was Cologne, Germany's third largest city at the time. According to RAF figures the raiding force actually numbered over 1,000 aircraft, including 602 Vickers Wellingtons, 131 Handley Page Halifaxes, 88 Short Stirlings, 79 Handley Page Hampdens, 73 Avro Lancasters, 46 Avro Manchesters and 28 Armstrong-Whitworth Whitleys. The raid was considered a success, not least for being the largest bombing in a single night on a German city. The damage to Cologne was substantial, with 13,000 buildings destroyed and around 45,000 people made homeless.



Heydrich's car photographed after the attack – visible is the damage inflicted by the grenade

British troops in a landing craft en route to Madagascar

OPERATION IRONCLAD

On 5 May British troops landed on Madagascar, held at the time by Vichy French forces. Though Charles de Gaulle had requested Free French forces be used in taking the island, Churchill pressed ahead with his plan to seize Madagascar, which was defended by Vichy forces including a sizable number of local Madagascans. The British targeted the island to prevent it threatening Allied shipping lanes, potentially serving as a base for Japanese submarines.

DEATH OF THE BUTCHER

On 27 May, SS officer and governor of the Nazi occupied protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, Reinhard Heydrich, was attacked by two Czech soldiers in Prague. Trained by the British Special Operations Executive, Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabcík inserted into the country months earlier and met with the Czech resistance while they planned the assassination of Heydrich. The pair ambushed Heydrich's car while he was travelling to his headquarters in Prague Castle. Known as the 'Butcher of Prague' for his ruthless tactics, Heydrich had months earlier presided over the Wannsee Conference, in which he put forward the Nazis' "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" in Europe. Heydrich died days later of his injuries sustained during the attack.

STILWELL'S MARCH

American General Joseph Stilwell is pictured leading his troops in Burma during his long march to escape the advancing Japanese forces. Stilwell had been charged by Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek to command expeditionary forces in Burma to defend against the Japanese invasion. However the Allied line had quickly capitulated, and a long retreat towards India began in the spring of 1942. Stilwell and his men left their base at Shwebo, north of the capital Mandalay, at the beginning of May and travelled north by truck and jeep. After days traversing rough terrain, the roads and railways being blocked with fleeing soldiers and refugees, Stilwell abandoned his trucks and continued on foot and in jeeps. His epic journey out of Burma ended some weeks later and he arrived to a hero's welcome in New Delhi on 24 May.

All images © Getty

THE FALL OF ROME

Q&A WITH DON HOLLWAY

The end of the Roman Empire is one of the most intriguing periods of ancient history, as one of the most powerful centres of civilisation succumbed to — at least what is commonly perceived — barbarian hordes. The real history of how and why Rome collapsed is of course more complicated and is the topic of a new book by historian Don Hollway

In *At the Gates of Rome*, from Osprey Publishing, Don Hollway unpacks the story of the sacking of Rome in 410 CE through the stories of two prominent leaders, one a Roman general, the other a king of the Goths. Through meticulous research and storytelling, Hollway recounts the campaigns, plots and power struggles behind Rome's final years.

At what point in the history of the Roman Empire does At the Gates of Rome pick up? How long had Rome been in decline at this point?
You could argue that it had been declining ever since the 'Crisis of the Third Century' – decades of civil strife, economic upheavals, plague, invasions and warfare. By the mid-4th century the empire was divided in two halves, East and West. They did not always get along.

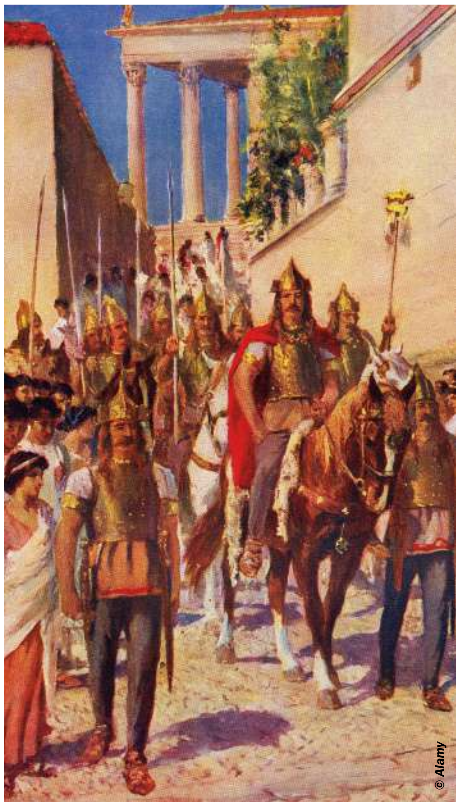
But *At the Gates of Rome* really begins with the Battle of Adrianople in 378 CE. The Goths, trying to escape the pressure of the Huns on the eastern steppes, were eager to become assimilated – subjects of the empire – in exchange for its protection. This longstanding policy had greatly benefitted both the empire and barbarian immigrants. "This, more than anything else, is why Rome flourished," declared the 1st century historian Plutarch. "She always united and assimilated within herself those whom she conquered."

However, instead of assimilating the Goths, corrupt authorities mistreated and abused them to the point that they went on a rampage. At Adrianople, Eastern Emperor Flavius Valens brought an imperial army to stop them but the Romans were annihilated, Valens was killed and the Goths came into the empire unconquered, on their own terms. For them it amounted to a successful invasion.

"INSTEAD OF ASSIMILATING THE GOTHS, CORRUPT AUTHORITIES MISTREATED AND ABUSED THEM TO THE POINT THAT THEY WENT ON A RAMPAGE"

At the Gates of Rome recounts the fall of Rome in 410 through two prominent figures, General Flavius Stilicho and Alaric, King of the Goths. What are the main sources we have regarding these two men? Did you have to make any historical interpretation in order to tell the story more completely?
Stilicho is better documented than Alaric. The Egyptian-born court poet Claudius Claudianus, remembered as Claudian, was his veritable press secretary and propagandist. He was a valuable eyewitness, but always spun events to Stilicho's advantage. Luckily, there were plenty of writers even at the time who were no fans of Stilicho. The historians and theologians Jerome of Stridon and Paulus Orosius both blamed him for the fall of Rome, even though by that time Stilicho was dead. They, and other more neutral accounts of events, balance Claudian's view.

Below: A depiction of Alaric, King of the Goths, entering Athens in triumph in 395 CE


© Alamy

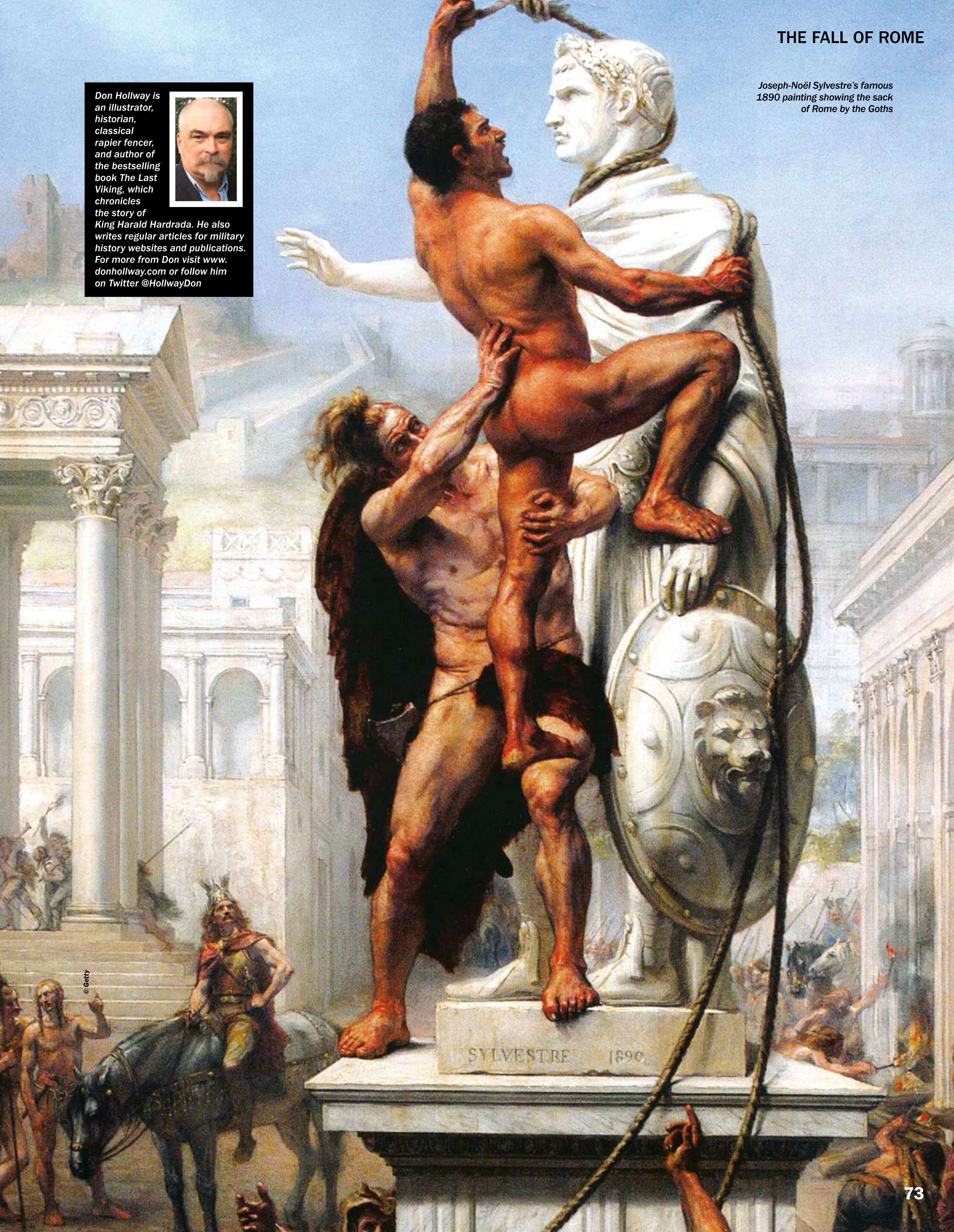
Alaric had no publicist. We know him by his exploits. As the man who sacked Rome, he was a popular topic back in the day. Few writers knew him personally, but Stilicho did, and we can view Alaric through him.

An historian has an advantage in knowing how a story ends. With that foresight you can see why historical characters did what they did. I like to quote the primary sources, letting the people who were there speak for themselves. When I fill in some blanks – speculate, or interpret events as I see them – I make it clear to my readers.

What caused the Goths and Romans to become allies and why did this alliance break down?
The new emperor, Theodosius, needed to replenish his army and control the Goths. He did both by giving them amnesty and recruiting their warriors into the legions. Then, at the Battle of the Frigidus River in 394 CE, he sent them into battle first, poorly supported.

They suffered 50 percent casualties, with 10,000 killed. Even contemporary writers suspected that he purposely thinned their ranks. Afterward, Stilicho used the Goths to make trouble for the Eastern empire, but Alaric no longer trusted the Romans. He played the two empires against each other, making his people the deciding factor in the balance of power.

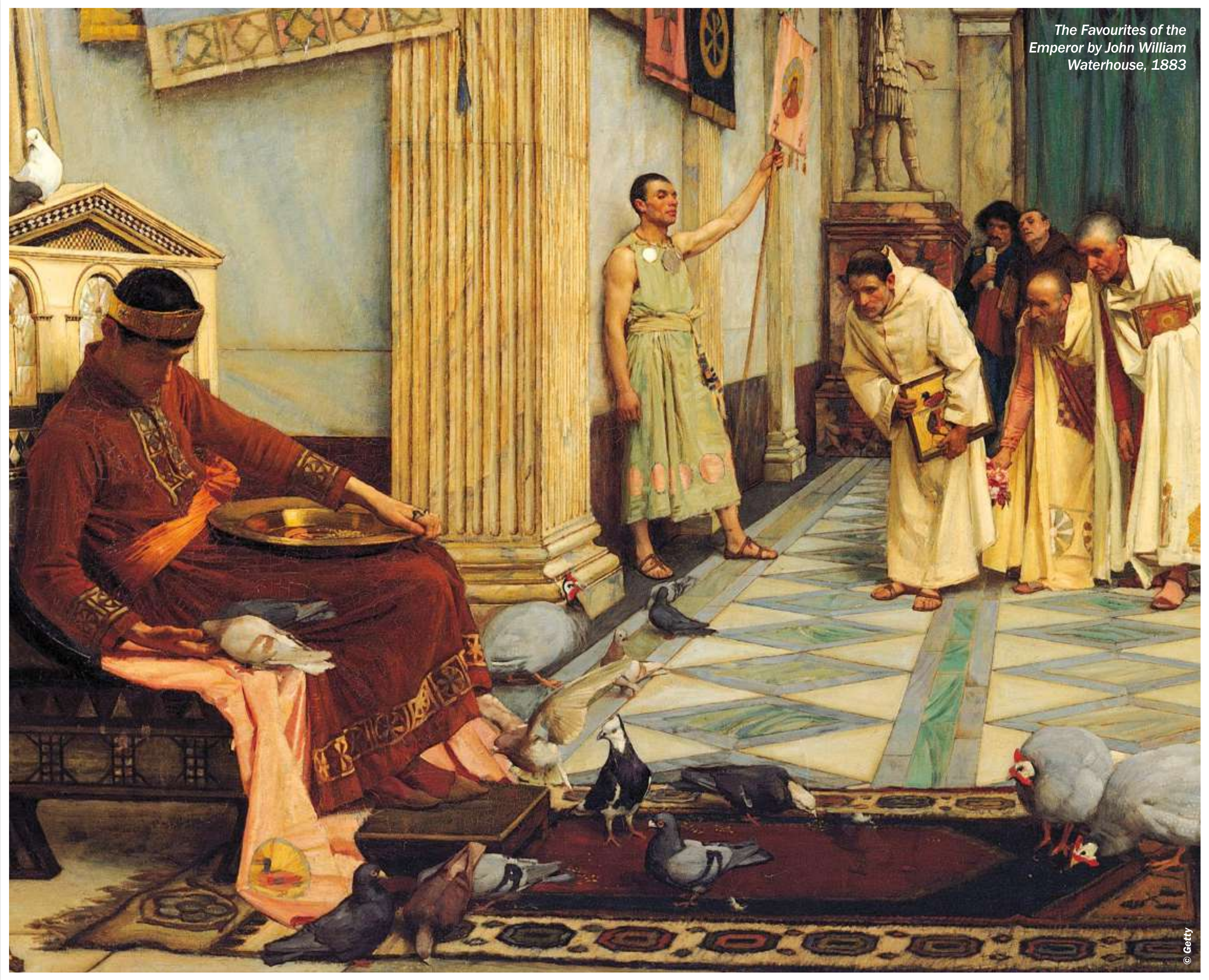
A common view of the fall of Rome is that it was a conflict between civilised Romans against a horde of 'barbarians'. How accurate is this? What was the makeup of the Roman population and military during the decline of the empire?
By the early 400s CE who was Roman and who was barbarian was a grey area. Stilicho himself was half-barbarian. Most Romans had little desire to serve in the military, so



Joseph-Noël Sylvestre's famous 1890 painting showing the sack of Rome by the Goths

© Getty

Don Hollway is an illustrator, historian, classical rapier fencer, and author of the bestselling book The Last Viking, which chronicles the story of King Harald Hardrada. He also writes regular articles for military history websites and publications. For more from Don visit www.donhollway.com or follow him on Twitter @HollwayDon



The Favourites of the Emperor by John William Waterhouse, 1883

© Getty

the legions were almost entirely manned by barbarian mercenaries, many of them Goths. Roman bigotry led to the downfall. In 408 CE, many of the Goths' women and children in the cities were massacred in a genocide. Thirty thousand legionaries mutinied and joined Alaric; they're the ones who conquered Rome.

How did the Goths succeed in taking Rome in 410 CE? What were the key factors in their victory?
Goths didn't take cities by storm – they basically just blockaded Rome and strangled it. Starving citizens resorted to cannibalism. Finally somebody – either a sympathiser, infiltrator or some poor soul just hoping for mercy – opened a gate and let the Goths in.

What do contemporary accounts tell us about the sacking of the city and the treatment of its inhabitants?
Those who lived through it, whether conquerors or conquered, left few accounts. Many would have been illiterate, their stories were lost or, of course, they never lived to tell the tale. Yet enough is known, and enough archaeological evidence has been uncovered, to piece it together. We know where the Goths entered the city and we know their progress by the destruction they left behind. Large parts of Rome were burned. Murder and rape were endemic. Christianity itself, still a new religion, was changed by the catastrophe, with church fathers going to great lengths and some convoluted reasoning to see to it that God did not get the blame.

Below: *A 5th-century denarius bearing the image of the emperor Honorius*

DNHONORI
VSPFAVG

© Getty

Some of your readers might be wondering if Western Civilisation is heading down the same road as Rome, towards a fall. What do you think?
Historians have tallied over 200 reasons why the Western Empire fell – everything from its slave economy and constant civil wars to epidemic plagues, general corruption and immorality, right down to lead in the pipes. The direct cause is, of course, obvious: the invasion of the city by a barbarian horde. *At the Gates of Rome* shows how and why the Goths succeeded when the barbarians who came before them failed. I examined the evidence and came to my own conclusion. Given current events, some people might disagree. My readers can decide for themselves.

At the Gates of Rome is available now from Osprey Publishing

DON HOLLWAY
AT THE GATES OF ROME
THE FALL OF THE ETERNAL CITY AD 410

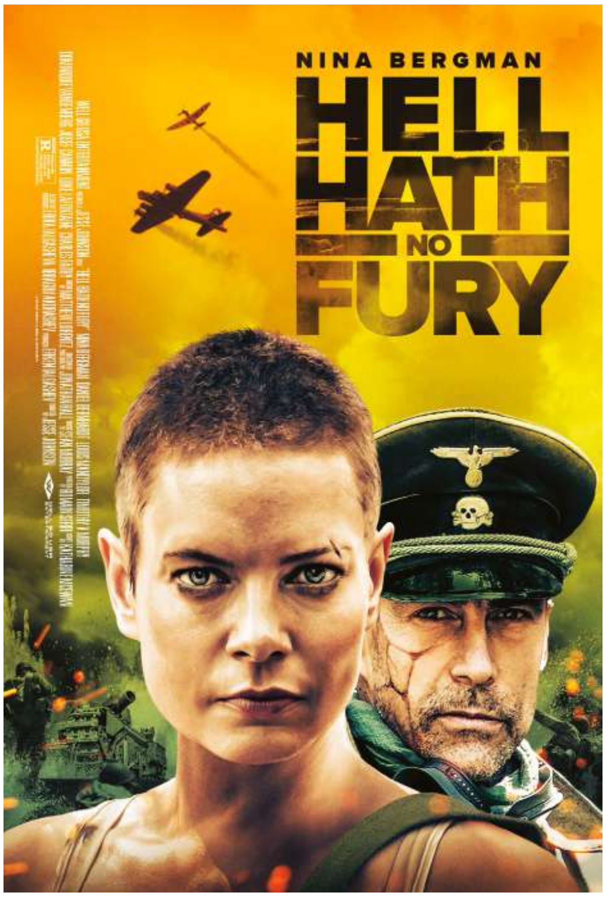
REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

HELL HATH NO FURY

AN ENTERTAINING YET HISTORICALLY DUBIOUS MOVIE ABOUT A NAZI GOLD HEIST THAT GOES HORRIBLY WRONG FOR EVERYONE

Directed by: Jesse V Johnson Starring: Nina Bergman, Daniel Bernhardt, Louis Mandylor, Timothy V Murphy Distributor: Dazzler Media Released: 16 May 2022



This film seems set to split audiences between those who love it and those who loathe it. The unfolding tale includes a plucky French resistance heroine, greedy GIs, belligerent Frenchmen and marauding SS. In many ways it harkens back to the heyday of war movies in the 1960s and 1970s, clearly evoking the war-weary cynicism of *The Dirty Dozen*, *Kelly's Heroes* and *Where Eagles Dare*. However, it also exhibits Tarantinoesque *Inglourious Basterds* sensibilities with its double-cross within a double-cross. Likewise, it also features the classic Mexican standoff.

Inevitably the film employs many familiar war movie clichés – not least the last stand against overwhelming odds. In this respect it brings to mind *Saving Private Ryan* and *Fury*. In all three the logic for conducting an Alamo seems hardly credible. Everything, though, hangs on Nina Bergman, who gives a solidly convincing performance as Marie DuJardin – the heroine accused of collaboration with the Nazis. This leaves her disowned by everyone and lands her in prison, but her actions are driven by a deep and vengeful secret. Likewise, of note is Daniel Bernhardt (known for *Bloodsport*, *John Wick* and *Nobody*) who plays the villainous SS officer Von Bruckner with absolute relish.

What makes the story different is that the American characters, desperately racing against time to find the gold, come across almost as evil as the Germans. They will stop at nothing. As one Frenchmen points out, in this story, the Americans are there to kill Germans not save France. Unfortunately, presumably due to a limited budget, much of the action is confined to a French cemetery, which leaves the story feeling somewhat set-bound. However, this keeps the plotting tight, with the backstory fleshed out by flash backs.

From a military history point of view, if you're going to be picky, the 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich in August 1944 was busy escaping the German collapse in Normandy. It is therefore not entirely clear what a 2nd SS Battlegroup is doing confronting American troops pushing up from the French Riviera following Operation Dragoon. They should have been from the 11th Panzer Division, which was the only German armoured unit left in the region. Nor is it clear how the GIs rescued Marie from her angry compatriots. The movie is full of other goofs and anachronisms: watch out for the exploding TNT and intact jeep, as well as resurrected extras. While it is nice to see the Czech-built 38(t) light tank on screen the chances of the 2nd SS having any by 1944 are pretty much nil. The presence of a Soviet BTR-40 armoured personnel carrier from the 1950s is not so welcome.

Overall, though, this is an entertaining romp of an action movie with plenty of firepower on display. Furthermore, it is good to see a strong female protagonist who holds her own against her male counterparts and (spoiler alert) survives all the bloody mayhem. **ATJ**

OPERATION MINCEMEAT

THIS BY-THE-NUMBERS WORLD WAR II DRAMA TELLS THE MACABRE TRUE STORY OF A DEAD VAGRANT WHO DECEIVED THE NAZIS

Directed by: John Madden Starring: Colin Firth, Matthew Macfadyen, Kelly Macdonald
Released: Out now

BASED ON THE EXTRAORDINARY TRUE STORY
OPERATION
MINCEMEAT

‘Safe’ is a word that best describes the World War Two spy-drama, *Operation Mincemeat*. As British cinemas return to a sense of normality following the lockdowns initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are already beginning to see the regular collection of superhero epics, romantic comedies and animated children’s films that usually fill the screens of multiplexes across the country. Among the current spate of releases is *Operation Mincemeat*, which comfortably fits into the well-loved category of the ‘British WWII star-studded drama’. Typical of its genre, the resultant film is a decidedly ordinary affair which offers little new despite being based on one of the conflict’s more colourful tales of espionage and intrigue.

The real operation utilised the corpse of homeless man Glyndwr Michael and disguised him as a fictional British officer in order to convince Nazi Germany that Britain was planning to invade Greece and Sardinia instead of Sicily. Michelle Ashford’s screenplay, based on Ben Macintyre’s book, follows these events fairly simplistically. *Operation Mincemeat*’s key problem is one of tone – the film doesn’t seem to know exactly what it wants to be. In some moments it approaches Michael with poignancy and care, in others it revels in macabre comedy – sometimes clumsily following one with the other. At other times the film focuses on romantic melodrama, before remembering it is in fact a movie about espionage and moving swiftly on.

Instead of concentrating on one of these areas the film appears content to accept its lot as a routine ‘drama based on true events’. All the usual cliches of a modern British WWII film are here. Churchill is present, though he needn’t be, adding little to nothing to an already muddled film. Historical cameos are highlighted in an over the top manner, with Ian Fleming appearing only to utter the occasional James Bond reference and provide an excuse for the flamboyant narration. Characters talk continuously of the war and seemingly nothing else, existing as cyphers for large chunks of exposition. Finally, Admiral John Henry Godfrey is turned into the semi-villain of the film, making sure our heroes can be portrayed as ‘underdogs’ - a cliche popular in contemporary historical dramas.

In most other respects the film is exceedingly well put together. John Madden’s direction is inventive and engaging, while Thomas Newman’s excellent score is just what you’d expect from a composer of his calibre. Where the film shines in particular, however, is its cast. Colin Firth delivers as always but it is the performances of Matthew Macfayden as Charles Cholmondeley and Penelope Wilton as Hester Leggett that really stand out. Wilton in particular effortlessly brings both pathos and a sense of class to some of the more exposition-heavy lines, while Macfayden develops a character that feels rounded and fully sympathetic, if not always likeable.

Operation Mincemeat is an unfortunately by-the-numbers World War Two drama, mainly hampered by a script that suffers from a lack of inventiveness and focus. However, for those who enjoy this type of film it is a routine but not unenjoyable affair. While it may not break any new ground its relative safety and sense of familiarity see it destined to become a streaming favourite for viewing on a particularly lazy Sunday afternoon. **CM**

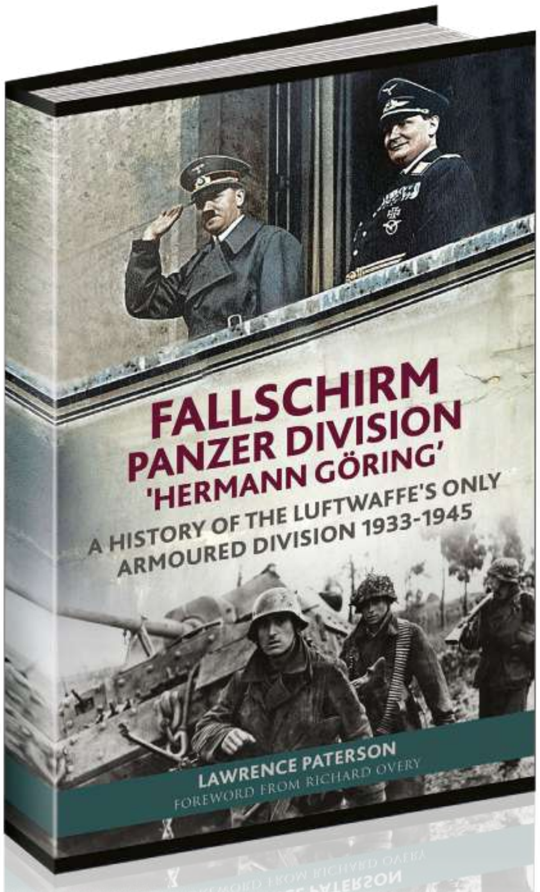
Images © Alamy

FALLSCHIRM

PANZER DIVISION 'HERMANN GÖRING'

A METICULOUSLY DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE GERMAN AIR FORCE'S CHAOTIC FORAY INTO THE WORLD OF THE PANZER TANK, DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

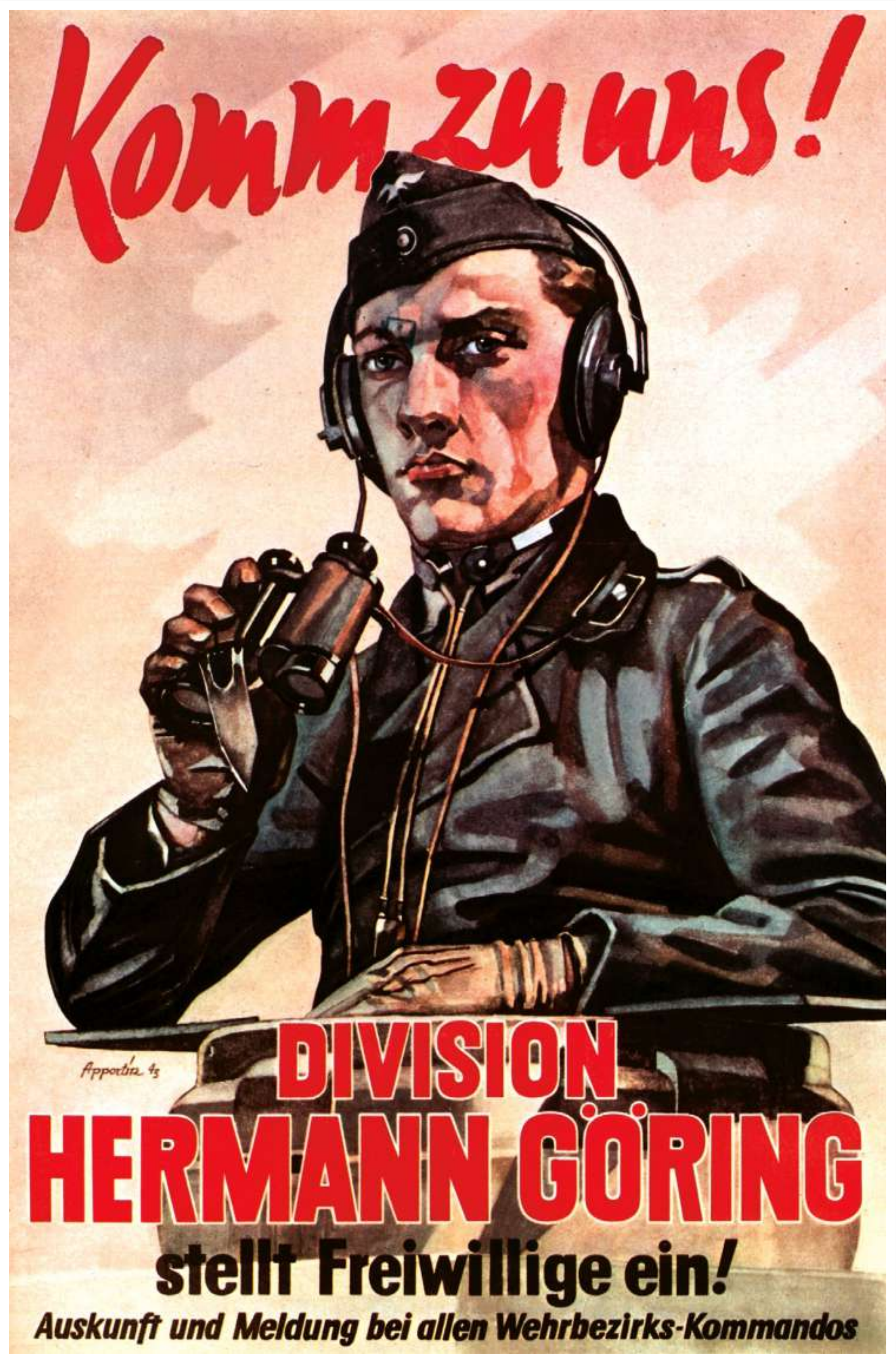
Author: Lawrence Paterson **Publisher:** Pen & Sword **Price:** £25


FALLSCHIRM
PANZER DIVISION
'HERMANN GÖRING'
A HISTORY OF THE LUFTWAFFE'S ONLY
ARMOURED DIVISION 1933-1945
LAWRENCE PATERSON
FOREWORD FROM RICHARD OVERY

The German Wehrmacht was infamous for the myriad of often bizarre formations it created during WWII, and Lawrence Paterson does an excellent job of covering the genesis and combat history of one of its strangest – the Hermann Göring Panzer Division. Starting out life as a paramilitary force at the disposal of the Prussian Interior Ministry, it soon expanded into something of a personal army for its overblown boss and head of the new Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring. Its first action was the invasion of Czechoslovakia: "The drivers don't have driving licenses yet, we haven't fired a single bullet, and we go to war anyway."

From then on Paterson recounts the evolution and expansion of the unit as it took part in the attack on the Soviet Union, but the book really comes to life when the paratroopers and tankers of the Hermann Göring moved to the Mediterranean to fight in Tunisia, Sicily and mainland Italy. Throughout, Paterson seeks to balance an often confusing and ever-changing organisational structure with personal testimony from members of the division. What emerges is a picture of increasing chaos and improvisation as the Third Reich retreated on every front. Paterson is honest about the division's patchy track record, with one of its own commanders bemoaning that during the fighting in Sicily "men came running to the rear, hysterically crying because they'd heard… a single shot". However, Paterson also details the often-dogged defence displayed by the division as it fought against heavy odds.

In all, *Fallschirm Panzer Division 'Hermann Göring'* is an important contribution to an otherwise little-known but fascinating unit. **JG**


Komm zu uns!
Apportin 43
DIVISION
HERMANN GÖRING
stellt Freiwillige ein!
Auskunft und Meldung bei allen Wehrbezirks-Kommandos

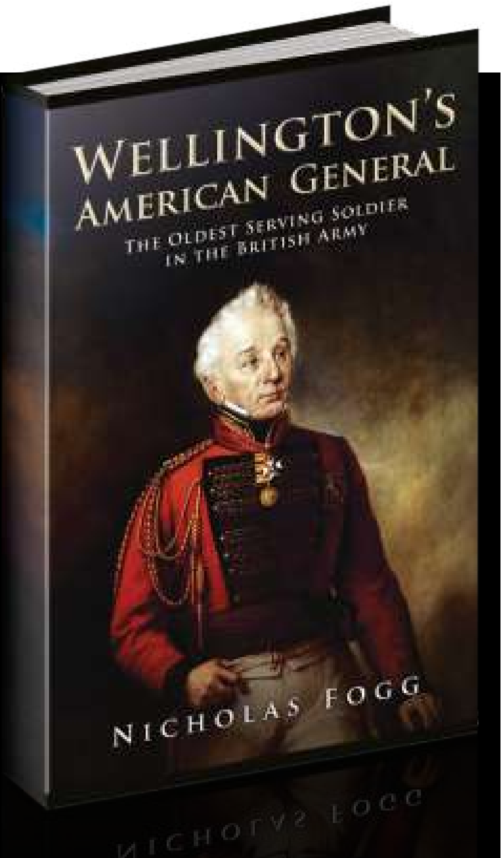
A World War II German recruitment poster for the Division Hermann Göring, an armoured Panzer division of the Luftwaffe, with the words "Komm zu uns!" ("Come to us!"), 1943

© Getty

WELLINGTON'S AMERICAN GENERAL

THE OLDEST SERVING SOLDIER IN THE BRITISH ARMY

AN ENTERTAINING AND AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT OF A REMARKABLE MILITARY CAREER



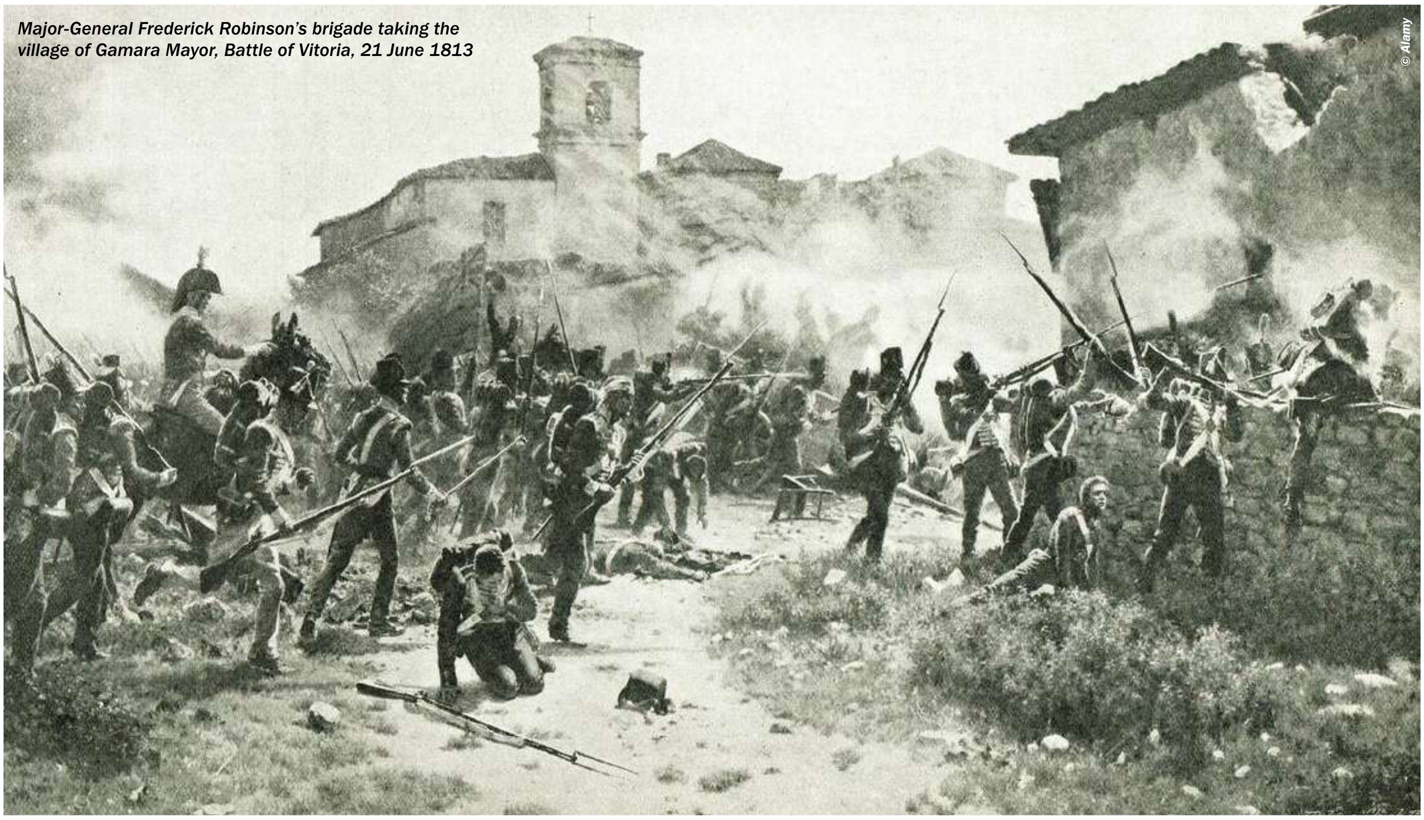
Author: **Nicholas Fogg** **Publisher:** **Amberley** **Price:** **£20**

There is an insatiable appetite for books on the Napoleonic Wars, and Nicholas Fogg will find an appreciative audience for his latest work. *Wellington's American General* works on several levels. First of all, it is a fascinating account of the unusually long and eventful military career of Frederick Robinson. Secondly, it is a well-written travelogue, packed with detail and anecdote that will be engrossing to any enthusiast of the era. Finally, it offers eyewitness accounts not only of battles but of the swirling rumours surrounding military matters – being a brigadier general did not necessarily mean an officer had any idea what was really going on.

Robinson's military adventures started when he was just 14, fighting as a Loyalist during the American War of Independence. Remarkably, by the time he was a general in Wellington's Peninsula Army he was only about halfway through his career, which lasted until 1852.

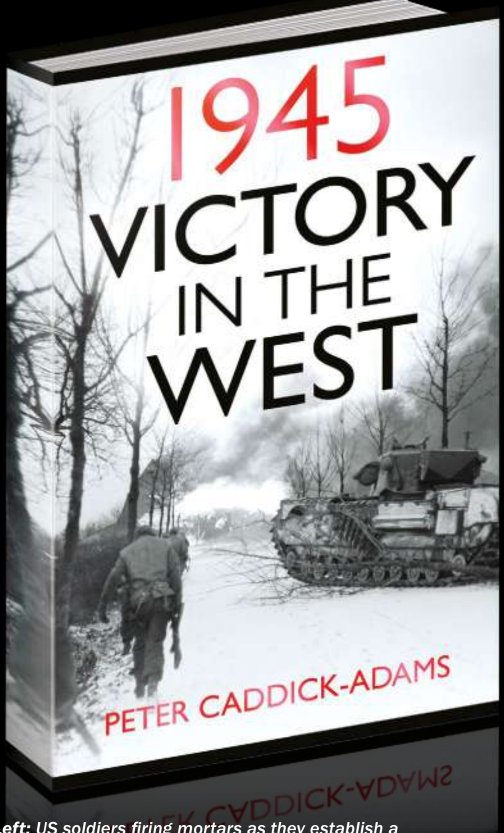
Robinson is an interesting character. His voluminous notes have helped Fogg immensely, revealing a man with wit and spirit, but also occasionally an ability to be blind to the struggles of others. The author is not slavish in his depiction of this soldier, in fact on several occasions he criticises an action or comment, but there is also a sense of affection for the man.

The writing is occasionally staccato and sometimes relies too heavily on extended quotes from Fogg's journals and letters, but overall this is a very readable account that offers valuable insight into the life of a high-ranking officer in the British Army. **DS**



Major-General Frederick Robinson's brigade taking the village of Gamara Mayor, Battle of Vitoria, 21 June 1813

© Alamy



Left: *US soldiers firing mortars as they establish a beachhead on the east bank of the Rhine. March 1945*

1945 VICTORY IN THE WEST

THE FINAL 100 BLOODY AND HARD-FOUGHT DAYS OF THE ALLIES' ADVANCE ACROSS HOSTILE AND DEVASTATED TERRITORY

Author: Peter Caddick-Adams **Publisher:** Penguin Random House **Price:** £30 **Released:** May 2022

In early 1945, US General Dwight D Eisenhower assembled seven Allied armies, totalling four million soldiers, to launch an invasion of the Western Reich. Military historian Peter Caddick-Adams, in his sweeping and thoroughly documented narrative of that offensive, offers an in-depth account of the last 100 days of the Second World War. It is a tale rarely revealed in histories of the war's final weeks which, as the author points out, tend to dwell on the 1944 D-Day landings, the summer battles in Normandy, the autumn stalemate of Operation Market Garden in Holland and the winter campaign in the Ardennes forests.

The author bases his research on an extensive list of sources. These include hundreds of personal interviews from survivors of Auschwitz, army officers from both sides, reporters on the front line and even General Erwin Rommel's son. There's also material from numerous military museums, archives and secondary sources. The book is divided into three parts, chronicling first the campaign to push the Germans back to the River Rhine, then the bitter fighting on the enemy's homeland, and finally the struggle to achieve total victory.

Caddick-Adams maintains that the three-month advance across the Rhine into the German heartland is an episode often glossed over in a few paragraphs in military literature. For the Allied commanders, ever since Normandy there remained this obstacle of the Rhine, the greatest water barrier in Europe.

The end of the war at this stage is often painted as predetermined, as if it only remained to occupy newly won territory and mop up a few diehards. As the author brings to light, the reality of these operations was quite different. Much hard campaigning remained to be done and there was bitter fighting all along the front, right up to the last moments. Victory may have seemed to be within reach, but it was by no means a foregone conclusion. General George Patton, a hard-as-nails, seasoned campaigner, confided in his diary the fear that the Allies could still lose the war against the Germans who, in his estimate, were better fighters.

> "ANY INVASION OF THE REICH, EVEN WITH THE GERMANS SEEMINGLY ON THE RUN, WAS GOING TO BE A SLOW AND COSTLY AFFAIR"

By March 1945, it was nearly ten months since the Allies had first set foot in northern France. Both sides had fought without respite since the initial landings on German-occupied soil and the Allied as well as the German armies were at near exhaustion. The 15 March setback at Utweiler, when the 7th Infantry suffered its worst day of the war, was a clear indication that any invasion of the Reich, even with the Germans seemingly on the run, was going to be a slow and costly affair. No one would have believed there was less than two months of fighting left before the demise of Nazi Germany.

Caddick-Adams' account of those last days shows that it was never going to be an uneventful, peaceful laying down of arms. Even as General Bernard Montgomery was signing the German surrender document on 4 May, the Protestant chaplain of the Canadian Grenadier Guards and a lieutenant were killed while trying to bring in some wounded Germans. That same evening, south of the small German town of Rastede, Allied patrols had already set out to round up German troops from nearby woods. They were met with a fury of enemy fire that left killed and wounded on both sides. The three-month assault that dealt Nazi Germany its death blow was a violent battle to the last. **JS**

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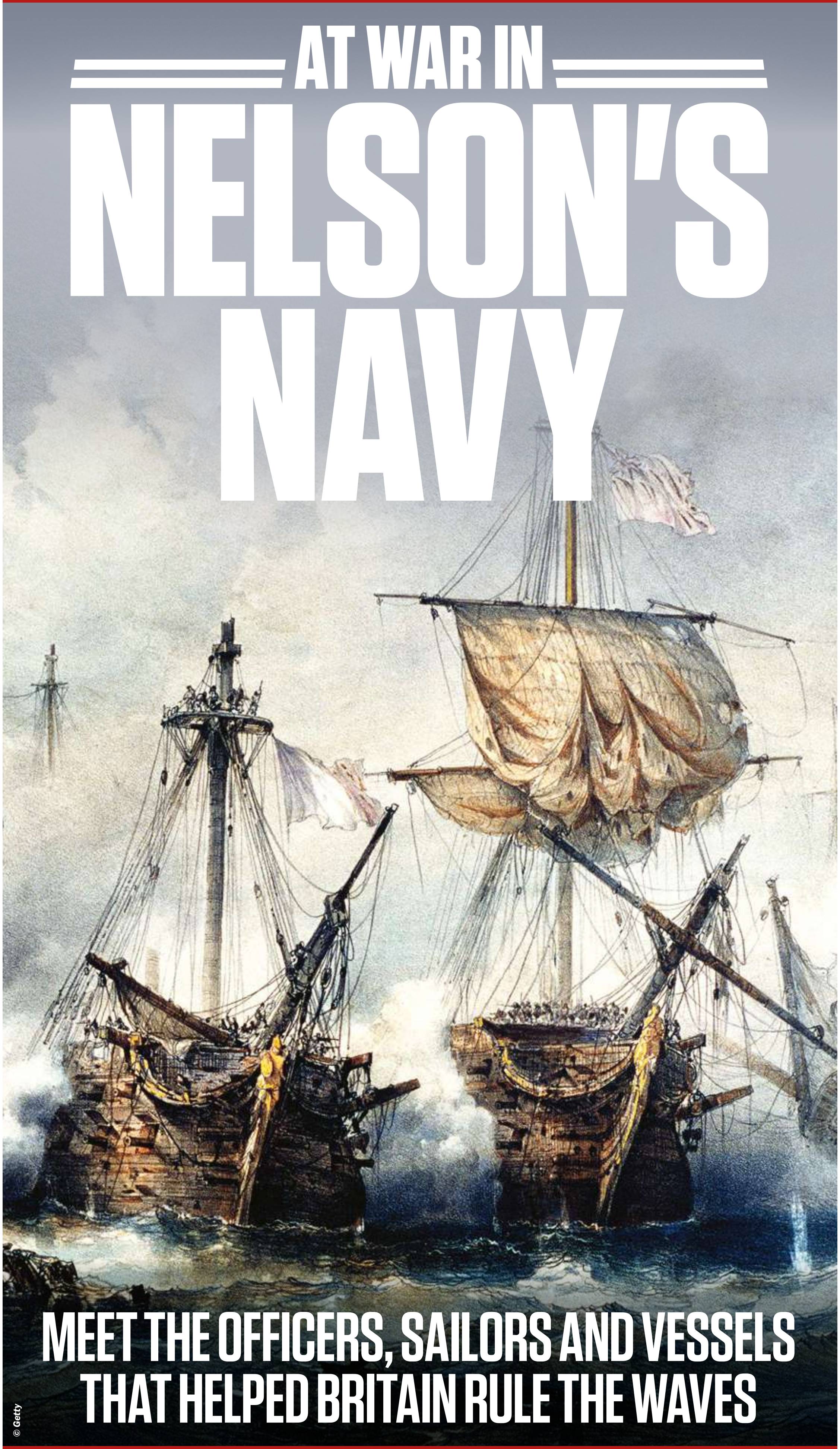
NEXT MONTH

AT WAR IN NELSON'S NAVY



MEET THE OFFICERS, SAILORS AND VESSELS THAT HELPED BRITAIN RULE THE WAVES

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ON SALE 9 JUNE

HISTORY OF WAR

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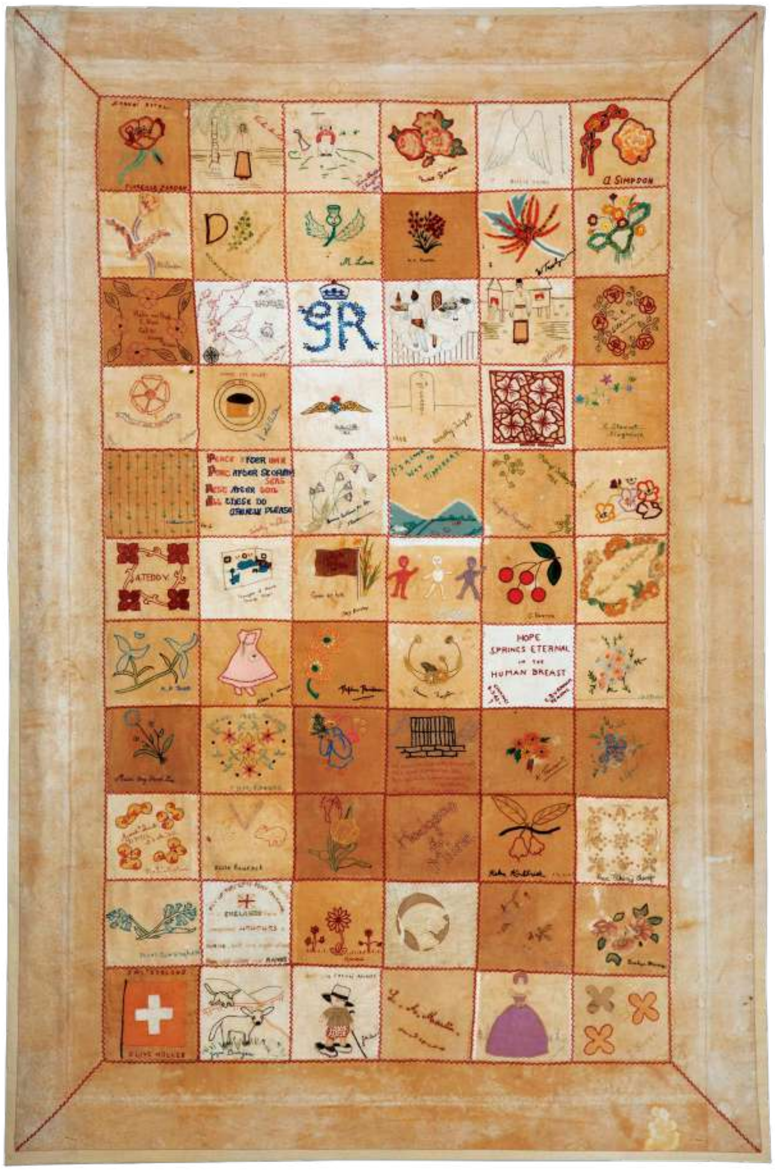
CHANGI QUILT

These 66 squares of fabric made by Allied women interned by the Japanese army during WWII have come to symbolise love and defiance

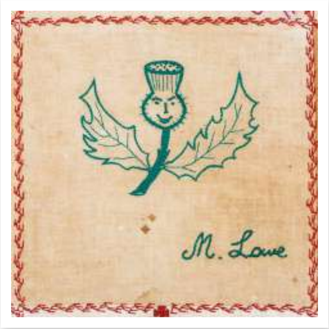
Described by Winston Churchill as the "worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history", the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 alluded to a supposed Allied weakness that Japanese forces could capitalise on. However, as around 2,800 civilians – doctors, teachers, missionaries and their families – were rounded up, separated between men and women and imprisoned, one group of female internees decided to display their strength by making what became known as Changi quilts.

This remarkable piece of stitchwork – one of three made at Changi Jail in Singapore to relieve boredom and, more importantly, to boost morale – was the idea of Canadian internee and Red Cross representative Ethel Mulvany. Recognising that there were few ways to inform husbands and other male relatives that the women were alive, she proposed that female prisoners embroider secret messages into quilts permitted by Japanese authorities to be sent to the men at the nearby military camp. Each contributor received a six-inch-square of white material, believed to have been cut from an empty Red Cross food sack, that they could then stitch their name into alongside a personal and easily recognisable symbol. Such images or coded messages would signify that loved ones were still alive.

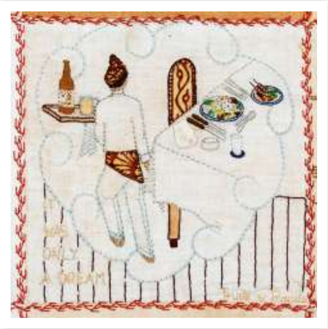
The patterns are unique to the individuals who created them. Australian internee Ossie Hancock, whose square is on the third row from the bottom, second from the left, showcases a "V" – perhaps to mean Victory – beside two rabbits that could have been a note to her husband about their two daughters. Near the middle of the quilt, British nurse Mary Buckley chose to depict symbols of Wales, including daffodils, a red dragon and the caption "Cymru am byth" (Wales forever). Trudie von Roode, a Dutch schoolteacher who made the square third from the top, fourth from the left, opted to portray a waiter and a table laid with a banquet of food next to the words: "It was only a dream." Meanwhile, on the back of the fabric is a message stating that after the war the quilt should be passed on to the Red Cross Society. One pragmatic internee also wrote: "It is advisable to dry clean this quilt."



Right: *Internees made at least three quilts, one each for the Red Cross Societies of Britain, Australia and Japan. A fourth might have been made for Canada, but its location is unknown*



Below: *This square (second row from the top, third from the left in the main picture) was created by Mary Lowe, who was only 18 when imprisoned*



Below: *Dutch prisoner Trudie von Roode helped young internees cope by establishing a Girl Guide group and teaching them patchwork*

BRITISH RED CROSS MUSEUM

The Changi quilt is part of the British Red Cross Museum and Archives collection, which holds approximately 30,000 items related to the British Red Cross' humanitarian work. Curator Mehzebin Adam-Suter has published a book entitled *Museum of Kindness*, exploring the items found in the museum's permanent exhibition of the same name. For more information visit:

redcross.org.uk/museumofkindness

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